

# A Bird's Eye View

Audubon Society of Omaha  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society



Volume 30, No. 4 April 2001

## Spring Celebration! by Jackie Scholar

Mark Thursday May 10 on your calendar for the annual ASO Banquet and Photo Contest. The Banquet will again be held at "Celebrations"-- located at 9809 M Street. The hall is one block south of L Steet and can be accessed via the frontage road going west from 96th Street.

The celebration will begin with a social hour at 6:00 PM followed by a buffet dinner at 7:00 PM. **Photo contest entries** will be on display for your perusal and judging prior to the dinner. Duane Bright is in charge of the contest; please call 291-6495 for questions.

Door prizes and entertainment will follow the dinner, as well as the annual award presentations and remarks. We will have a performance by the Northwest High School Swing Choir led by Mr Tim Marsden. New and returning ASO officers will be installed.

The cost of the Banquet is \$20.00 per person. Please return the **reservation form (on page 3)** with your check payable to ASO and mail to **Jackie Scholar by May 3**. Hope to see you there!

## Birds of the Prairie and Plains: Nebraska

**Bird Chronicles from 1861 to 1900** by Clem Klaphake

What was the animal life like on the Great Plains in the 19th Century? One way to get information is to read the diaries and journals of explorers, homesteaders, military personnel, etc. For example, the Lewis and Clark journals can provide valuable information about diversity and abundance of wildlife during the 7,690 mile roundtrip from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean between 1804 and 1806.

Daniel Botkin in his book *Our Natural History: The Lessons of Lewis and Clark*, says "I discovered that I could make an estimate of the presettlement density and abundance of grizzly bears simply from the expeditions's encounters." He then compares today's Peterson Field Guide Series, *A Field Guide to the Mammals* range map of the grizzly bear, to the Lewis and Clark journals and concludes, ". . ."the journals expand the original extent of the large mammals beyond what is portrayed in a standard modern field guide."

What about birdlife in the 19th Century? At the April 12 Program Jim Ducey, author of recently published *Birds of the Untamed West: The History of Birdlife in Nebraska 1750 to 1878*, will discuss some aspects of birdlife in the latter part of the 19th Century.

His topics will include: how the English Sparrow got to Omaha; how hunter's records provide clues to bird occurances in the 1870's; how the Platte River was a bird haven in the latter 1880's; some of Sandy Griswold's writings; and other bits of bird-lore from historical accounts.

## Spring:

### April and May Field Trips

by Jim Kovanda

On Saturday April 21, field trip participants will meet at 8:00 AM on the southwest end of Forney Lake. We will look for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Depending on weather and activity at Forney's we may venture over to Waubonsie State Park to look for early warblers and other spring arrivals. If you plan to stay til after noon, bring your lunch. Please dress for hiking and bring binoculars.

Forney Lake is near Bartlett IA, about 22 south of the Bellevue Bridge access road off I-29. Waubonsie State Park is another 22 miles south on I-29. Refer questions to Jim Kovanda (731-8249).

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**Elections at the General Meeting:**  
see page 5

**Photo Contest at the Annual Banquet**

**Spring Bird Counts:** see page 5

continued on page 5



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## Scholarly Notes

by Eric Scholar



### "2001: A Crane Odyssey"

On the weekend of March 16-18 Jackie and I attended the annual Audubon Nebraska's Rivers and Wildlife Celebration in Kearney, Nebraska. This was the first time for us and we both thought it was an enriching and valuable experience. Several people had told me how good it was; they were right. Now I will be one of those recommending that everyone attend the conference

his talk and naturalist from the accompanying video Kearney area spoke about very interesting. James the top 10 reasons to Harris, President of the become a birder. He International Crane noted that birding is the Foundation spoke on fastest growing sport in the status of cranes America, with more worldwide and how birders than hunters and conservation efforts in fishermen combined. foreign countries must center around winning The element of being the trust and surprised was one of the cooperation of the best reasons to go local inhabitants to birding; one never knows

at least once or more.

I want to thank Dave Sands of Audubon Nebraska and Paul Tebbel of Rowe Sanctuary and their staff for putting together an excellent program. The field trips were great, the talks were great, and so was the food. Everything was very well organized. The weather was cooperative and even the cranes, prairie chicken, and geese were where they were supposed to be, at the right times, and in almost peak numbers.

I'd like to summarize some of the experiences and talks to give those who couldn't attend a feel for what it was like. We attended everything we could, only missing those talks that occurred when we were out on field trips. Jackie enjoyed everything as much as I did. I've been to many meetings related to my work, but never have I been to one where more than 95% of the talks were so interesting, enjoyable and informative as at this conference. Of course that may have been because the others were work related.

**Cranes,Waterfowl,Photography**

On Friday afternoon we heard Paul Tebbel's talk on crane migration, and although I have some knowledge of this subject, I found

make it successful.

After dinner, Mike Forsberg a Nebraska nature photographer, told of the trials and tribulations of being a nature photographer and how he gets great photographs. Several of his photos were on display where they could be purchased. He is a wonderful photographer. One of his photos of the Nebraska Nine Mile Prairie was chosen to be a U.S. postage stamp. The cover of the latest issue of Nebraskaland magazine has his photo of a Prairie Chicken.

On Saturday morning I went on a field trip to the Rainwater Basin where we saw hundreds of thousands of Snow Geese, many ducks, several Harriers, and other birds. It was led by Lanny Randolph and Robin Harding, two very knowledgeable birders from Gibbon NE.

**Saturday Presentations**

Ed Carlson, Director of the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and Audubon Center of Naples, Florida showed slides of the newly redone visitor center and its unique on-site sewage treatment facility called "Living Technology". It recycles the facilities' sewage for reuse of its water and for plant growth. This facility contains the largest stand of old growth bald cypress trees in the country and also is a nesting site for wood storks,an endangered species.

John Kozak, a teacher, writer, and

when one will see a bird nor what bird one will see. Observing birds was a `real' experience to offset all the technological experiences of today's society. He also talked of how one should go about birding if a beginner.He was very informative.

Paul Hendron, Superintendent, Niobrara National Scenic River and Missouri National Recreational River presented a summary of a new Niobrara National Scenic River general management that will be finalized in late 2001. The National Park Service has worked closely with the Niobrara Scenic River Advisory Commission and the Niobrara Council in developing this plan. For more information visit [www.niob.\\_gmp@nps.gov](http://www.niob._gmp@nps.gov).

A "Birding by Ear" talk was given by Tom Damiani, an Avian Naturalist with the Nature Conservancy. He has put together his own CD of birdsongs called "Birdsongs,Inc."

continued on page 7  
**April Calendar**

**Mon 2 Conservation Meeting**

**Wed 4 Board Meeting**

**Thu 12 General Meeting**

**Sat 21 Forney Lake Field Trip**

**21 Art Contest Awards**

**Sun 22 Earth Day**

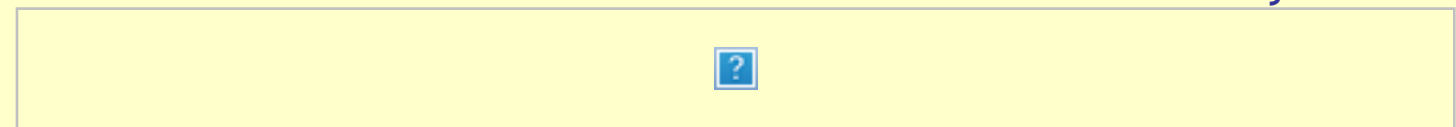
**Wed 25 Nature Study**

**Sun 29 Field Trip**

**May 5(Sat) Desoto Count**

**May 10(Thu) Banquet**

**May 12(Sat) Sarpy County Count**







## Bird Study at Bellevue by Nelli Falzgraf

With spring walks come the lyrics of music. How do warblers and other songbirds produce intricate songs?

Our voice box (larynx) is between our mouth and windpipe. It has a set of vocal cords that vibrate as air passes over, producing sounds.

Unique to birds is the location of their voice box (syrinx) at the junction of the windpipe and the two bronchial tubes that leads to the lungs. This allows for two pairs of vocal cords, one over each bronchus.

The syrinx wall has vibrating membranes between circular rings. Muscles adjust the tension of membranes and rings, varying the pitch and timbre. Also, voice boxes and windpipes act as resonating chambers to intensify calls and modulate songs.

Voice boxes vary greatly. Songbirds have at least seven pairs of syringeal muscles that modify the songs of two vocal cords from air of both lungs. It's no wonder we can't sing like warblers.

Please join Betty Grenon for an engaging warbler video and slides of other spring migrants. Ms Grenon is the Coordinator of the Christmas and Spring Bird Counts of our area for the National Audubon Society.

7:15p.m. at the Bellevue Library on Wed April 25. From I-80 east, take the Kennedy Freeway south. Exit at Cornhusker and go east 2 miles. It's at the southeast corner of Lincoln & Harvell Roads. Questions? 292-9687.

## The Omaha Raptor Team

### A Committee of ASO



By Alison O'Connor

I was just thinking recently about how blessed the Omaha Raptor Team has been with the birds that we have acquired over the last two years. We've obtained our birds from across the United states, which has opened the door for us to new friendships with people from other organizations.

Our most recent acquisition, Spike, the Eastern Screech Owl, finally brought a few of us face to face with one of our 'friendly voices from the phone'. Pictured here in the middle with Jenny Henricksen and Alison O'Connor is Lori Arent, from the Raptor Center at the Univ. of Minnesota in St.Paul. Lori has made herself available to the Team. We obtained Fred, our Red-tailed Hawk, from Lori, and it was with Fred that we acquired

our Federal Permit. Jenny, Linda Schulz and myself have wanted to visit the Raptor Center for many years.

We decided to forego flying Spike on an airplane and made a road trip instead. This enabled us to pick up our bird and view the wonderful facilities that Minnesota has. Lori was most accomodating and we were pleased to have finally met her. She gave us another great raptor!

Many thanks to our other volunteers who stayed home to care for our birds while the rest of us traveled. They were kind in knowing our desires for seeing the facility. Thanks for the teamwork!

Be sure to come to the April 12th General Meeting, as Spike will be in attendance. He's looking forward to meeting all of you!



### Banquet Reservation

Celebrations, 9809 `M' Street; one block south of L Street

Access via frontage road going west from 96th Street. Cocktails 6:00 PM, Dinner 7:00PM

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Number and Street City State Zip

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ reservations.

The cost is \$20.00 per person. Make checks payable to ASO and mail to Jackie Scholar,  
5012 Nicholas Street, Omaha 68132. **Reservations must be received by May 3.**



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### Environmental/Legislative Action By lone Werthman



#### "Aliens"

A recent article in the March/April *National Parks*, the magazine of the National Parks Conservation Association, intrigued me. "Using Science to Battle Aliens" reported how a plant-eating beetle is curbing the spread of purple loosestrife in national parks. Purple loosestrife is an exotic plant introduced in the early 1800's from Europe as an herbal treatment for dysentery and ulcers, and as a contaminant in ship ballast. It is fast growing and invasive. A single mature plant can produce more than two million seeds annually. It has invaded wetlands in 47 of the lower 48 states.

Brian Klatt, who is researching the use of the beetle at the University of Michigan's gardens, said "While the plant's attractive purple

#### LB 273: Industrial Hemp

An interesting bill in the Unicameral is now up for debate. LB273 provides for cultivation of industrial hemp in Nebraska. It is not marijuana and cannot be abused as a drug. It contains virtually no "THC", the active ingredient in marijuana.

It is grown commercially in Canada, France, and the United Kingdom. It has been grown experimentlly in Arkansas, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Virginia, and Hawaii. Fifteen other states have set up funding for committees to research its use and regulation for the licensing and inspection for growing the crop.

It can also be environmentally

more fuel to use in the future, as well as more dollars saved.

1) For the average passenger car, by cruising at 65 miles per hour instead of 70, or 70 mph instead of 75, you'll save \$5.00 per hour. Owners of larger light trucks can save as much as \$10.00 an hour.

2) Avoid speeding. Not only will you avoid a ticket, but you'll save fuel. If you can, keep speed constant by using the cruise control.

3) Roll up the windows. At highway speeds, less energy is expended running the air conditioner than it takes to overcome the aerodynamic drag from open windows. At speeds less than 40 miles an hour and especially in town, the reverse is true.

4) Use the air conditioner when it makes sense. Running

flowers have made it popular in landscaping, the plant displaces native vegetation, which is critical feeding and nesting habitat for waterfowl, muskrat, or just about anything." Selling it is illegal in 19 states, including Nebraska. Get rid of it if you have some in the yard.

The plant-eating beetle is also an exotic; introducing another alien species into the environment is risky. Experiments are being carefully controlled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure that the beetle will not begin to attack native species. Scientists have worked fifteen years on the project and expect to take another ten years before success can be measured.

Now if we could only find a beetle that would munch on the Asian Reed Canary grass that has invaded Heron Haven the last ten years. I've read of goats eating the 'outlawed' Leafy Spurge, but I'm not sure if they would like to wallow around in a wetland in Omaha. The Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund again didn't grant ASO money to dredge to eradicate the grass; we're back to square one. I have received estimates of \$200,000 and up for the dredging costs.

friendly. It is a vital renewable and biodegradable resource for fuel, oil, paper, building materials, cloth, rope, fiber, food, industrial chemicals, paint, plastics, seed, yarn, etc. The hemp fibers can be spun and woven to a fine, crisp, linen-like fabric and used for apparel textiles, home furnishing textiles, and carpeting. The product is twice as absorbent as wood shavings, making it excellent for animal bedding and garden mulch. It blends with lime to create a strong, yet lightweight concrete or plaster. Birds love the seeds.

Industrial hemp can be grown on a range of soils, but tends to grow best on land that produces high yields of corn. It requires limited pesticides, because it grows quickly and attracts few pests. It also requires little water, no fertilization, and thus has great potential for Nebraska.

LB273 is the priority bill for Senator Ed Schrock, Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee in the Unicameral. Keep watching!

### Gas Saving Tips

I recently ran across these gas saving tips from the Nebraska Energy Office and want to share them with you. Every ounce of gas saved means

the air conditioner increases gasoline use. If rolling down the window will cool the vehicle, do that instead. On sunny hot days, park in a shady spot.

5) Check the trunk. While certain items are essential (spare tire, tire jack, emergency supplies), other heavy items can decrease fuel efficiency. Remove items that may not be needed.

6) Perform regular maintenance. Changing the oil every 3,000 miles is recommended. Changing dirty air and oil filters, and worn spark plugs also improves gas mileage.

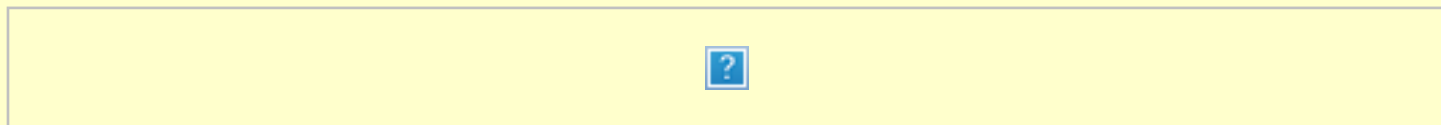
7) Less fuel is used by restarting your engine than idling for two or three minutes. It's something to keep in mind the next time you're waiting at a fast food drive-through.

Join us the first Monday of each month, April 2, May 7, June 4, etc for our conservation/legislative action committee meetings. We start at 7:30 PM and end at 9:00 PM.

### *Birdline*

For an update on the sightings in the state, call 292- 5325.

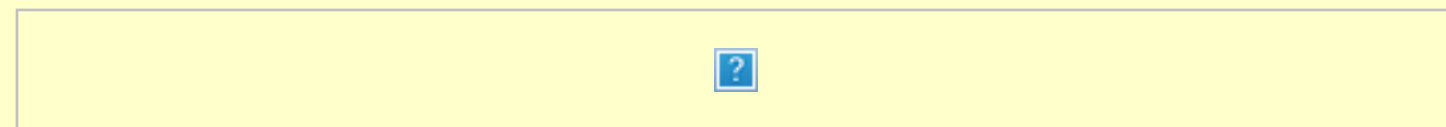
Report your sightings after listening to the tape.



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### Audubon at Work by lone Werthman



### Earth Day Omaha April 22

ASO has joined a coalition of over twenty

### Special Events on Earth Day

### Nebraska Birdline

by Loren and Babs Padelford

With the coming of Spring and the northbound migrants, calls to the Birdline



organizations for environmental education and family-oriented events in downtown Omaha at the Gene Leahy Mall from noon to 8:00 PM to celebrate Earth Day Omaha 2001. Special events includes the following activities.

Booths: "Green" demonstrations and environmental information will be distributed by many organizations.

**ASO will have a booth.** If you will volunteer to help at our booth, call the Audubon Office 445-4138. If you will help the members of the coalition run the event on April 22, call John Niemoth of the Boy Scouts 359-8884. If you know of any organization that would like to set up a booth for the celebration, call Marian Hackett 553-1453.

Live raptors and exotic animals: Our **Omaha Raptor Team** will be on hand with live birds of prey. **Wildlife Learning Encounters** will have an interactive presentation of wild and exotic animals.

Electric Car Exposition Race: Over 20 teams of area high school students who've built their own electric cars will showcase and race them.

Children's bike Race: For more information contact Dan Jennings 333-1031.

Children's Art Project: The Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts will sponsor a fun interactive children's art project.

Tree giveaway: Over 3,000 trees will be given away free.

Music: Two stages will feature over 15 bands playing music for all ages and interests.

Speakers: There will be speakers for keynote topics, and opening and closing ceremonies.

ASO Art Contest and Display

ASO will display the art of the Student Art Contest winners "Birds of Nebraska" at the West Roads Mall Saturday April 21 and Sunday April 22. The art will depict Nebraska birds in their native habitat. All schools in the Omaha metropolitan area have been invited to participate. Awards and certificates will be presented to the winners at a special awards ceremony on Saturday.

Historical Riverboat Ride

The Nebraska chapter of the Sierra Club will host a two hour cruise 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM on the Missouri River April 22. Noted historian Hal Sternes of Wayne Nebraska, will recreate the journey of Lewis and Clark. Call Mary Green 932-7225 for tickets and information.

Audubon Education Center

The snow melted in February and it flooded; it rained in March and it flooded. Fortunately, damage was minimal because volunteers like Duane Schwery and Jeffrey Chungath were there to battle the flood.

The Audubon Society of Omaha appreciates the quick action of volunteers who came and cleaned up. Special thanks to members of the `Birding for Beginners' class who stayed to help Audubon members and supporters.

We now have new double steel doors to our future Bird Garden. No more snow, cold wind, snakes, and mice!

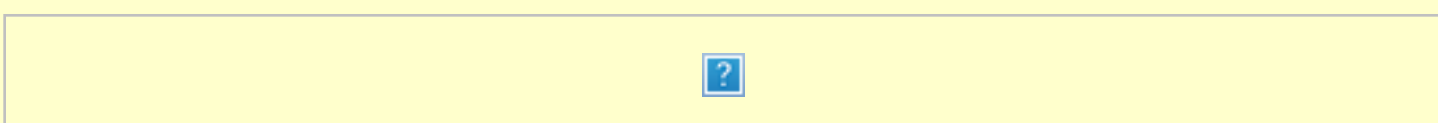
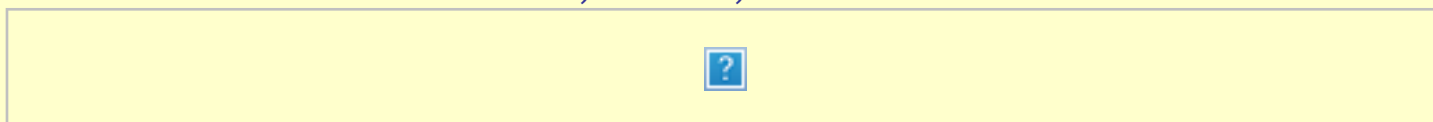
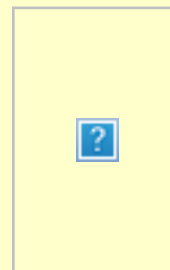
are on the increase, with many coming from new callers. We welcome every call, although we may not be able to use every report on the Birdline recording. Each report helps us to know what birds are coming through the area and in what numbers.

The Nebraska Birdline is also available on the Nebraska Ornithologist's Union web page <http://rip.physics.unk.edu/nou/> and on the Iowa Ornithologists' Union web page <http://www.iowabirds.org>. It is also available through e-mail from Nebraska Birds listserver (NEBirds). To sign up for NEBirds, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEBirds> and follow instructions.

The Nebraska Birdline, along with all the other birdlines in the central U.S., is available via e-mail from the National Birding Hotline Cooperative. To subscribe, send a message (no subject) to <listserv@listserv.arizona.edu> with the following text: subscribe BIRDCNTR (your name here without parentheses).

Please keep your bird sighting reports coming to the Nebraska Birdline at 292-5325. Reports can also be sent via e-mail to <lpldfrd@juno.com>.

If you find an injured bird of prey, please contact a Raptor Recovery Center volunteer at 402-734-6817 or 402-731-9869.





#### April 12 General Meeting:

#### Birds of the Prairie & Plains continued from page1

Jim earned his B.S. degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1979 and his masters in biology from the Omaha campus in 1984. He is a 5th generation Nebraskan and a freelance writer who was raised and still resides in Omaha. He is a former President of the ASO.

He is the author of *Nebraska Birds: Breeding Status and Distribution* (1988). He has published articles in *Nebraskaland Magazine*, *The Nebraska Bird Review*, and various Sandhills newspapers. Jim will be available to sign copies of his latest book, *Birds of the Untamed West*.

**Elections of officers for the 2001-02 year** will be held; a nominee list can be found in the March newsletter.

Please join us at the Thursday April 12 General Meeting at 7:30 PM in the Hanscom Park United Methodist Church, 4444 Frances Street (1 block south of 45th & Center).

A short business meeting will follow the program, concluding with coffee, cookies, and conversation. Field guides for many nature-related topics, t-shirts and other items will be for sale before and after the program.

#### Special Field Trips for Spring continued from page1

There will be no leaders assigned for May field trips. However, starting with the last Sunday in April and every Sunday in May (including Mother's Day) some experienced birdwatchers will meet to look for warblers and other spring migrants. Please join us at 7:30 AM on Sunday morning at the parking lot of the Wetlands Learning Center; it's at the end of Gifford Road in Fontenelle Forest.

There is an entrance fee. If you will be participating more than once or twice, you may want to become a member of the Fontenelle Nature Association.

Refer questions to Jim Kovanda at 731-8249.

#### Spring Bird Counts: May 5 & 12

We'll track resident and migratory bird species, and thereby help to monitor the health of bird populations that live and fly through our area.

#### April Bird Calendar By Babs Padelford

Migration is in full swing. The following is a partial list of birds that migrate through the area and the most likely times to see them, their arrival times subject to weather patterns.

#### \*Early\*

Common Loon

Grebes: Horned, Eared

American White Pelican

Double-crested Cormorant

Great Blue Heron

Turkey Vulture

Greater Prairie Chicken: booming continues

all month at Burchard Lake, Pawnee County

American Woodcock: continues display flights

(Loop Trail, Lake Manawa)

Gulls: Bonaparte's, Franklin's

Passerines: Tree Swallow

Winter Wren

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

American Pipit

Sparrows: Fox, Savannah

#### \*Mid\*

Great Egret

Raptors: Swainson's Hawk, Osprey (area lakes)

Shorebirds: Greater & Lesser Yellowlegs, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Baird's Sandpiper, Common Snipe. Jack Sinn Wildlife Area, Lancaster Co; Rainwater Basin, Central NE; and Riverton Wildlife Area, Fremont Co, IA are most reliable areas.

Bonaparte's Gull

Passerines: Swallows, Barn,

Northern Rough-winged, Purple Martin

House Wren





Everyone is welcome. Novices will be teamed with more experienced birdwatchers. Spring is the time to see birds in their best courting plumage (like the bird guides) and hear their lively songs that advertise breeding status, serenade mates, and proclaim territories.

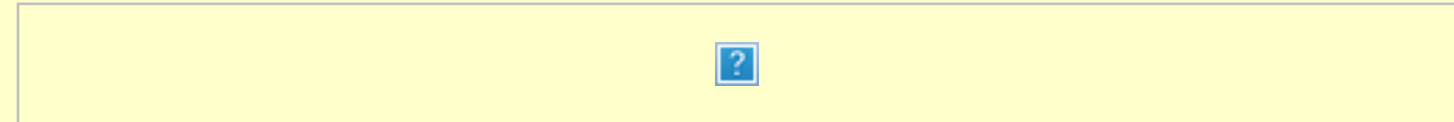
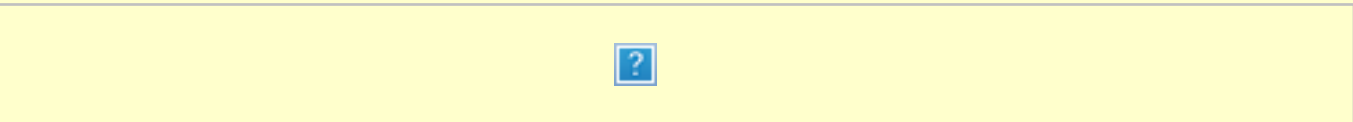
Hermit Thrush  
Warblers: Yellow-rumped, Yellow-throated,  
Louisiana Waterthrush  
Sparrows: Chipping, Field, Vesper, Lincoln's

The **Desoto NWR/Boyer Chute** Count will be Saturday May 5. For details please call Jerry Toll at 453-9239 or Mindy Sheets at 642-4121.

**\*Late\***  
Black-crowned Night-Heron  
Shorebirds: Piping Plover, American Golden Plover, American Avocet, Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Phalarope

The **Sarpy County Count**, part of the North American Migratory Bird Count, will be Saturday May 12 at four quadrants: Fontenelle Forest, Cedar Island, Lake Manawa IA, Glenwood IA. Please call Betty Grenon at 731-2383.

Frankin's Gull  
Forster's Tern  
Passerines: Brown Thrasher  
Warblers: Northern Parula, Orange-crowned. Fontenelle Forest, Neale Woods, Schramm State Park, Dodge Park, Hummel Park are all good for migrating passerines.



**Scholarly Notes by Eric Scholar** continued from page 1



**Birding with Pete Dunne**

**Rowe Sanctuary & Tom Brokaw**

Late Saturday afternoon we went to the Rowe Sanctuary to witness the nightly arrival of the cranes. We were surprised and a bit excited to see that Tom Brokaw of the NBC nightly news was with us in the blind. He was accompanied by his friends, the owners of Patagonia and his wife. He was on a private viewing experience; there were no TV cameras, etc.

As usual the cranes' arrival was spectacular and noisy. I couldn't help comparing the arrival of the cranes on the sandbars and their jockeying for position

ticle by Clem Klaphake on birding with Pete Dunne.)

After the talk, Dr Paul Johnsgard was presented with the Audubon Nebraska's Fred Thomas Conservation Award for his long years of service to humanity, his role in conservation efforts, and his scholarly works involving the study, writing, drawing, and speaking of birds, especially Nebraska ones. He was presented with a Mike Forsberg photograph of a Prairie Chicken.

**Prairie Chickens and Bison**

On Sunday Morning we got up at 5 AM to see

by **Clem Klaphake**

I had the opportunity to bird with Pete Dunne, the banquet speaker at the Rivers and Wildlife Conference in Kearney. On Friday evening March 16 Pete and his wife Linda joined a small group of us in the northeast blind on the Platte River at Rowe Sanctuary. Pete had never experienced

with everybody in the blind moving around to find a good view. I think we were warmer than the cranes who were standing in the cold Platte River water. Paul Tebbel compared their arrival to people deciding which restaurant to go to. Do you go to one where there are hardly any cars or to one with a lot of cars in the parking lot? The cranes always seem to land on a sandbar already occupied with other cranes.

### **Banquet**

After the last crane arrived we left the blind and returned to the hotel for the evening banquet and a talk by Peter Dunne. He and two others are finishing up the fifth edition of Roger Tory Peterson's field guide which was in progress when Mr Peterson died. Dunne told a fictional story about Peterson and his after-death experiences in heaven. Soon after arriving in heaven Peterson met an angel and began trying to classify the angel wings by feather length, color, and edges--just as we differentiate birds. One could tell that Dunne was a good writer. (Please see the following ar

the Prairie Chickens display at a lek about 30 minutes from Kearney and not far from the Kansas border. The sun was just rising and we heard a deep humming, grumbling sound in the background. We saw one, two, eventually 18 birds, displaying and fighting. Every once in a while we would hear a sound like a shotgun going off. This was the booming of the birds.

While driving back to the hotel through the Funk lagoon a Prairie Falcon was sighted. Breakfast was waiting when we returned.

After breakfast Dr Johnsgard talked about Nebraska birds and prairies. Then John Hansen, manager of Ted Turner's Sandhills Ranch Properties described the process by which Turner acquired ranches in Nebraska and began the establishment, operation, and management of bison herds. We learned much about how to raise bison.

On the way home, as was true on the way there, we saw many cranes in the fields along the interstate, as well as the usual contingent of Red-tailed Hawks counting people as they drove past.

the spring Sandhill Crane migration spectacle in central Nebraska. He was truly in awe of what transpired as the sun began to set and the cranes came back to the river by the thousands. He indicated to me he would have to put this night's experience as one of his more memorable ones.

On Saturday thirteen of us again joined Pete and his wife for a morning of birding in the Rainwater Basin. It was a little early to see large numbers of species of birds, but the waterfowl and crane numbers were outstanding. Pete was very congenial and gave out lots of 'hints' and clues to bird identification.

We saw a Cooper's Hawk in the distance sitting on a fence post, which gave Pete an opportunity to describe raptor identification techniques in terms of silhouettes and behavior. We also had a Prairie Falcon fly parallel to our van for about a half mile. The other raptor we were able to discuss identification

points about  
was a Harlan's  
Hawk. It  
spent  
considerable  
time soaring  
over us while  
on the Bike-  
Hike Trail  
over the  
Platte River.

Besides the  
millions of  
Snow Geese,  
ducks, and  
cranes, other  
birds seen  
were Eastern  
Bluebirds,  
Harris's  
Sparrow,  
Black-billed  
Magpie, and  
most of the  
other winter  
residents.

## National Audubon Society

### Membership Application

The *Audubon Magazine* and your membership card will be sent to this address:

Name

Street

## Memorials

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

When sending your gift, please identify the person you wish to memorialize. Please also give the name and address of the person to be notified.



City

State



Zip Code

**Introductory Membership**

(1st & 2nd Year) - \$20

**Renewals: 3rd Year - \$25;**

**4th Year - \$30 thereafter**

**Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha**

**11809 Old Maple Road**

**Omaha NE 68164**

**PO 3**

**7XCH**

**Bequests**

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

