
The Meadowlark

October 2008

Volume 37 Issue 8

ASO is a Chapter

*of the National Audubon
Society*

*Serving Eastern Nebraska
and Western Iowa*

Tiny and Intriguing

Dr. Thomas Powers, Prof. of Plant Pathology, will speak at our general meeting Thursday, October 9, 7:30 p.m. at Hanscom Park Church, 4444 Frances (1 block south of 45th & Center).

Dr. Powers thinks small, microscopically small. For the last 32 years, he has devoted his working hours to the examination of minute worms called nematodes. He has a degree from Purdue University and a degree from the University of Florida where he studied deep-sea nematodes off the coast of the Dry Tortugas.

He earned a Ph.D. at the University of California-Riverside where he focused on a group of plant parasitic nematodes feeding on the roots of the tallest trees in North America.

Powers joined the faculty at UNL in 1985 where he

explores new applications for molecular diagnostics and examines communities of soil nematodes to assess environmental disturbance. A current project uses nematodes to evaluate the biology of soil in restored and native prairies.

As a Fulbright Scholar in Ireland, Powers worked on biological control of insect pests with nematodes that inject a lethal bacterium into the insect gut. He and his wife spent 2007 in Costa Rica studying nematode biodiversity in the lowland rainforests. He teaches courses in Invasive Species, Environmental Issues, Plant Pathology, and Nematology; plus a seminar, "Biological Invaders." He explains, "As we travel more, so do our associated pests and pathogens. West Nile Virus,

Cont. on page 3

Oct. 18 Field Trip to Spring Creek Prairie

On Sat, Oct. 18, Elliott Bedows will lead a trip to Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center south of Denton, NE. Wachiska Audubon is invited to join us. After lunch we may stay and bird a few spots close to Lincoln.

To carpool, meet at the south end of Southroads Mall at 6:30; we will meet at the Prairie at 8:00 a.m. Bring a lunch if you wish to remain for the afternoon.

Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for seniors and students. Watch the weather and dress accordingly. Last year we had 80-degree weather and over 40 participants; the year before we had sleet and no participants.

Depending on interest, a second field trip may be held Sunday, October 12, for the annual Big Sit! at DeSoto NWR to collect data on birds. To join, contact Elliott at 292-5017. Leave a message if you wish, and he will get back to you about the details.

Bird Seed Orders Due Soon

By Kathleen Crawford-Rose

The deadline for bird seed orders is October 10; sale dates are October 25 and 26.

Order forms have been mailed to all members and former customers. If you would like extra order forms to share with friends and neighbors, please call Carole and Dick Rasmussen at 731-3939 or Kathleen Crawford-Rose at 292-8912.

Our supplier has warned us that prices are up and will skyrocket in late fall or early winter, not because growing conditions have been poor in the Midwest but because the grain markets have been disrupted by the high demand for corn by the ethanol producers.

Be sure to order extra seed at current prices as they will rise. Stanley, our seed buyer, highly recommends it.

More hands are needed for loading the bags of seed for customers on October 25 and 26. To volunteer, call Jerry Toll

Misplaced or Out-of-Place Species

By Clem Klaphake

Alien or invasive species. Sounds pretty sinister. What is really meant is that a species—plant, animal, virus or bacteria—is not where we think it should be, and thus terrible things will result from this misplacement.

How a species gets misplaced can be a result of nature, as happened 3.5 million years ago when a mollusk species of the North Pacific Ocean invaded the North Atlantic. Before this time, the Arctic Ocean had created a barrier of nutrient-poor water under ice. But then a period of global warming made the Arctic more open and "friendly" to foreign mollusks and mussels. Did the Atlantic Ocean become less diverse in terms of mussel species? No, it increased in diversity due to an increase in hybridization.

The Arctic Ocean appears to be warming again—probably for reasons related to human activity this time. Some computer projections now show that the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free part of the year by 2050 (that is less than two generations from now). So does this mean that we will see a repeat of what happened 3.5 million years ago? Some say yes (Dr. Peter Roopnarine of the California Academy of Sciences and Dr. Geerat Vermeij of the Univ. of California, Davis) and some say no (Dr. Anthony Ricciardi of McGill Univ, Montreal).

Dr. Vermeij argues that the current biological invasions are very different from those of the past. He states, "What's happening now is a major form of global change. Invasions and extinctions have always been around, but under human influence, species are being transported *faster* than ever before and to remote areas they could never reach previously. You couldn't get 35 European mammals into new Zealand by natural mechanisms. They couldn't jump from one end of the world to another by themselves."

It is estimated that humans are moving 7,000 species a day. As a result, species are being moved or introduced to places never before seen. We tend to think of these invasive species as trees, grasses, birds (House Sparrow and European Starling) or other well-known species. But invasive species can also be microscopic or unnoticed.

Let me illustrate this last point with two examples. First, botulism is killing tens of thousands of birds around

the Great Lakes every year. It now appears that this outbreak is triggered by two invasive species. The quagga mussel, introduced from the Ukraine, makes water clearer. More sunlight can then penetrate the lake, which in turn allows more algae to bloom. Finally, more dead algae increases the amount of oxygen-consuming bacteria. With lower oxygen levels, botulism-causing bacteria multiply. The mussels take up the bacteria and are in turn eaten by an invasive fish species which is eaten by birds. The birds become infected and die.

Secondly is the case of West Nile Virus, which first showed up in the United States in 1999. It has had a dramatic impact on a number of bird species—especially the corvids. Recently it was reported that the Yellow-billed Magpie has been hit hard by this virus.

This bird species only occurs in central California and therefore does not exist in large numbers nor in a variety of geographic locations. The West Nile Virus became widespread in California in 2004. According to an article in *The Auk*, from 2004 to 2006, 12,211 Yellow-billed Magpie carcasses were reported to the California Department of Health Services. Of the 1,007 carcasses tested, 78 percent tested positive for West Nile Virus. The total population of Black-billed Magpies is about 180,000. The results of these tests indicate that this population may have been reduced by 49 percent in just two years. BBS and CBC data show dramatic declines in Yellow-billed Magpies also. In retrospect, I'm glad I was able to see this species for the first time in the summer of 2007.

Most of you have heard of the zebra mussel that has caused so much trouble in numerous waterways, lakes and rivers. It is now right here in the metro area. It was first identified in April 2006 in the Base Lake in Sarpy County. The Air Force has now begun treatment of the lake with copper sulfate. Two applications will be made between now and the spring of 2009. Each application will cost \$100,000. Remember this is a small lake!

In the future, you will continue to hear much more about alien, out-of-place, invasive or misplaced species from the Audubon Society of Omaha, politicians, conservationists, farmers, biologists, epidemiologists, backyard gardeners, pet owners, hunters, fishermen/women and others.

Fun at Prairie Festival

By Laurine
Blankenau

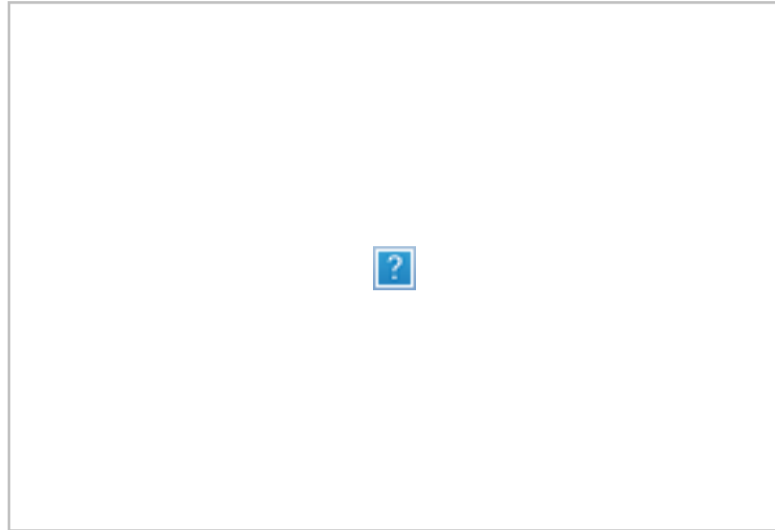
The 40 or more persons who experienced our Prairie as it appears on a hot day in late August responded with almost-equal warmth to the great guided hikes, the refreshing cool drinks and cookies, and the company of Audubon volunteers and fellow visitors.

The occasion was Audubon Society of Omaha's first Prairie Festival held Sunday, August 31.

The 90-degree temps didn't deter three of our members from conducting hikes nor the numbers of visitors, including some children, who joined them. Those attending were free to explore the prairie on their own, but most joined guided tours.

Glenn Pollock introduced hikers to the unique value and characteristics of prairies. Two birding hikes, pleasingly productive for this time of year, were led by Clem Klaphake. Eric Scholar, leading a prairie flower walk, enabled visitors to learn about and enjoy the beauty of the flowers.

We are especially indebted to these Audubon members who succeeded in making our first



From left, Bob (last name unknown), Schuyler Hopkins, Randy

Falzgraf, Eric Scholar, Jackie Scholar, Clem Klaphake

Prairie Festival a success. tures on the prairie.

• Eric Scholar for making the Festival his brainchild and for leading a prairie flower hike and sharing his wildflower expertise;

• Glenn Pollock, who maintains the prairie, for lending his support of the Festival and sharing his encompassing knowledge of prairies;

• Clem Klaphake for leading bird hikes and sharing his knowledge about these and other crea

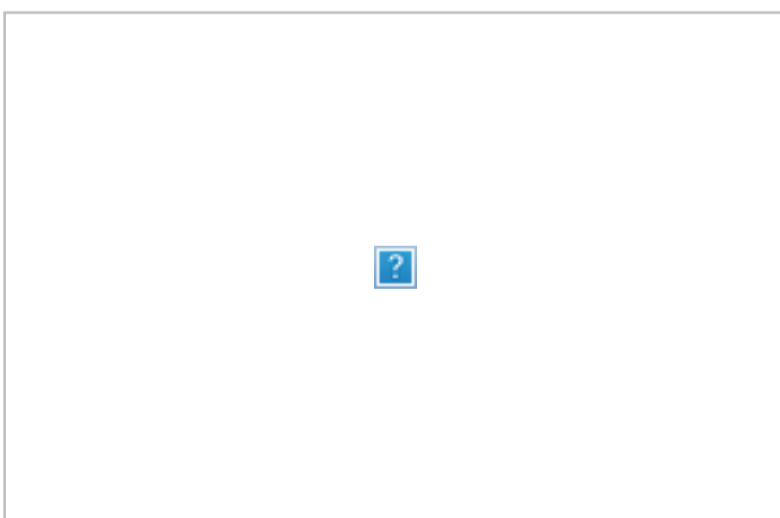
Assisting with preparations, greeting the visitors and dispensing the treats were Jackie Scholar, Nelli and Randy Falzgraf, and Laurine Blankenau. Konney Larwood directed traffic at the roadside throughout the event.

Tiny,

**Cont. from page
1**

Emerald Ash Borer, Zebra Mussels, Phragmites, Snakehead Fish—it seems that every month we hear about a new threat to our environment and our health. Where are they coming from? How quickly will they spread? Can we control their expansion?

"These are some of the questions faced by a wide variety of life-science professionals including conservation biologists, health and quarantine officials, park rangers, agricultural consultants and weed scientists. We will examine some of the historical and current invaders threatening Nebraska and other high profile ecosystems around the world."



Front row: Pauline Dickey, Eric Scholar, Glenn Pollock,

Charlie Stroberg; Back row: Jackie Scholar, Sam Stroberg, Randy Falzgraf; Joze Pihlar

Schramm Park Field Trip

Recycle Your Old

Cell Phones

By Loren and Babs Padelford

Despite dense fog, nine intrepid birders showed up for the ASO field trip at Schramm Park Saturday, September 7. Birding was minimal in the morning, but picked up after lunch when we visited the hiking bridge over the Platte River.



In Schramm Park we found a Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Yellow-throated, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos; a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; 3 Black-and-White Warblers; an American

Indian Pipe

Redstart and a Scowler. We also saw several funnel spiders, several egg sacs, Woodhouse Toads and a Northern Cricket Frog.

Except for Monarchs and a very cool wet Great-Spangled Fritillary, the flying insects were few.

The most interesting plant sighting of the day was a single Indian Pipe.

After the flying highlights were over, we saw White Pelicans, an Osprey, 3 Bald Eagles, a Cooper's Hawk, a Peregrine Falcon, a Semipalmated Plover, 2 Plovers, a Yellowlegs species, a Spotted Sandpiper,

5 Sandpipers, including a Pelecinid Wasp, 3 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 2 Least Sandpipers, 2 Baird's Sandpipers, a Pectoral Sandpiper, a Buff-breasted Sandpiper, 12 Franklin's Gulls

and 5 Black Terns.

If you are like most of us, you hate to throw your old cell phones in the trash. The concern is the sheer numbers of them taking up space and adding hazardous waste.

On the other hand, you may be reluctant to drive them around town to a recycling business that may not dispose of them properly. Some recyclers, maybe taking them for free, use disposal methods that are harmful to the environment, so it is a good idea to refrain from using these businesses.

Now ASO is prepared to collect old cell phones and drop them off at a local recycler that complies with EPA

regulations.

We have two pickup sites: one is at our office in the Center Mall, first floor, near

the west entrance. Covered parking is available on the 1st level, accessible from 42nd Street or Center Street. The

phones may simply be pushed through the door if we are not present.

The pickup site is at our general

meeting on the second Thursday of each month September through April, at the Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances Street, 1 block south of 45th & Center. You are invited to stay

and enjoy our fine programs. See first page of *The Meadowlark*, for complete information about the

Franklin's

Of course, if you wish, you may drop off the phones as well as other items at the recyclers: Electronic Disposal Technologies, 4815 South 115th Street. There is a small fee per pound, which ASO will pay if you leave the phones with us.

Electronic Disposal Technologies recycles the following items as well, which ASO does not handle: bar coders, circuit boards, copiers, CD/DVD drives, desktops, DVD players, Fax machines, hand held devices, keyboards, laptops, modems, monitors, printers, scanners, and televisions. Call them at 402-733-7297.

To call ASO re drop-off, call Laurine at 451-3647.

Pelecinid Wasp



Whooping Crane winging its way overhead or observe a grizzly bear or a gray wolf in the wild, you have the Endangered Species Act to thank that these creatures are still around. But now the Endangered Species Act (ESA) itself is endangered.

One of this nation's strongest safeguards against the extinction of animal and plant species, the ESA has worked well for over 30 years. It has successfully protected the Bald Eagle, the gray whale, the grizzly, as well as Peregrine Falcons and Whooping Cranes. But for more than a decade, Congressional Republicans have been trying unsuccessfully to rewrite the Endangered Species Act. Since that effort failed, the Bush administration is now attempting to use administrative powers to make broad changes to the ESA.

The proposed new rules, subject to an unusually short, 30-day comment period, would give federal agencies the power to decide whether protected species would be harmed by agency projects.

For the past 30 years, agencies had to submit any plans that potentially could affect endangered birds and animals to an independent review by scientists from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Under the new proposal, road building, dam construction, and other federal projects could proceed immediately if the agency in charge decides that they would not harm imperiled species. Environmental groups view with dismay this proposed elimination of an independent scientific review.

Most federal agencies do not have biologists on staff, says Bob Irvin of Defenders of Wildlife, so for them to be making decisions regarding how their projects will affect birds and animals, is "clearly a case of the fox guarding the chicken coop." The National Audubon Society has asked for an extension of the comment period and has requested that its activists oppose the rules changes.

When the Bush Administration was forced in May to list the polar bear as endangered, Secretary of the Inte

rior Dick Kempthorne said he would seek changes in the ESA. According to a *Washington Post* article, the Interior Department sta
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The beautiful fall season is not yet over at Neale Woods Nature Center. The Nature Center will close at end-of-day November 1. T

Sat, Oct. 4 - Raptor Program - 10-11:15

Sat. Oct. 18 - Bird Banding - 9:00 - noon

Sat. Nov. 1 - Bird Banding 9:00 - noon; Raptor Program 10-11:15

Membership fee required; members free. For information call Fontenelle Forest, 731-3140.

Seeking a Cure for Nature Deficit Disorder

On April 22 of this year, representatives of 16 environmental and civic groups, including ASO, met to discuss the means to introduce children to nature outside the classroom and develop a connection to natural places that is too often missing in children's lives.

To address the crucial issue of children and their need for outdoor play and

Disorder, to speak in Omaha on April 2, 2009. Following his talk, a parent/teacher forum will be held to formulate ideas from area nature groups on how to get students/youth outdoors.

These are a few of MORE's other plans, to date:

• Holding workshops for parents—three

frequent, unrestricted and unstructured experiences in nature, the need for a smaller, more efficient core group was recognized. A group of 5 members was then formed to meet and formulate goals.

The group, Metro Omaha Resources for Exploring Nature (MORE), is made up of persons from the Omaha Children's Museum, Hitchcock Nature Center, Henry Doorly Zoo, Schramm Aquarium, Green Hearts, and the Papio-NRD.

The group has identified 5 key goals:

• Educating community members of the Greater Omaha area about the value and importance of outdoor, nature-based play;

• Providing the community with new and expanded opportunities for structured/guided nature play;

• Providing the community with new and expanded opportunities for unstructured/self-guided nature play

• Providing community advocacy to expand and enhance opportunities for Omaha area residents to enjoy nature-based play;

• Securing contributions and/or budgeted funds to carry out all objectives.

Some of MORE's plans are underway. Partnerships have been made with Children's Hospital, the Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, and Countryside Community Church to bring Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods...Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit*

to be held at Hitchcock Nature Center, one at the Children's Museum, one at Safari Park, one at Walnut Creek Recreation Area, one at an OPS location, and other sites to be determined;

• Producing a brochure, "Parents' Guide to Nature Play" ; articles about nature play by Ken Finch/Green Hearts for local papers, magazines and newsletters;

• Build a website and logo to inform the public about the group and where community members can learn of events;

• Working with schools to hold Family Nature Nights and develop Nature Clubs;

• Developing model school yards and backyards for nature play and holding workshops on the development;

• Including a model backyard on the Street of Dreams;

• Hosting Kids' Gardening Workshops working with City Sprouts, Big Garden Project, Lauritzen Gardens, Master Gardeners and garden centers to provide workshops on how to involve kids in gardening both at home and on the school grounds.

The group has received \$50,000 from the NRD, which member organizations are asked to assist in meeting or exceeding.

At the April 22 meeting, the Audubon Society of Omaha was represented by Nelli Falzgraf and Laurine Blankenau.

Passion does not arrive on videotape or on a CD; passion is personal. Passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young. It travels along grass-stained sleeves to the heart. If we are going to save environmentalism and the environment, we must also save an endangered indicator species: the child in nature.

Richard Louv

Addresses to Remember

President George W. Bush

The White House, 1600
Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington D.C. 20500-0001

Comments: 202-456-1111; fax:
202-456-2993

Senator Ben Nelson

U.S. Senate, Washington DC
20510; 202-224-6551; fax 202-228-
0012; Lincoln: 402-437-5246;
Omaha 391-3411; Omaha address:

Audubon Society

Membership Application

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

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

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Senator Chuck Hagel

(1st & 2nd Year \$20)

U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.
20510-2705

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Suite 325,

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Omaha 68114

19612 Ridgeway Road

Phone: (202) 224-4224; Fax: (202)
224-5213

Plattsmouth NE 68048

PO 3

Omaha phone: (402) 758-8981

7XCH

Representative Lee Terry

U.S. House of
Representatives, Washington, DC
20515

Memorials

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

Phone: (202) 225-4155 ; Fax: (202)
226-5452

Omaha Address: 11717 Burt St,
Omaha 68154

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

Omaha phone: (402) 397-9944

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha, P. O. Box 3542
,Omaha NE 68103-0542

Representative Jeff Fortenberry

U to address the crucial issue of
children and their need for
frequent, unrestricted and
unstructured experiences in
nature..S. House of
Representatives, Washington, DC
20515Phone: (202) 225-4806

Lincoln phone: (402) 438-1598

Lincoln Address:

Governor Dave Heineman

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848 Lincoln,
NE 68509

Phone: (402) 471-2244; Fax: 471-
6031

Mayor Mike Fahey

Omaha/Douglas Civic Center

1819 Farnam St, Omaha NE 68183

Phone: 444-5000 Hot Line: 444-
5555

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



Bequests

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

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1st Vice President Urban Lehner 330-3888

**2nd Vice President Nelli Falzgraf.....
292-9687**

Past President Elliott Bedows.....292-5017

Treasurer Fritz Davis..... 391-4945

**Recording Sec'y Urban Lehner.....
330-3888**

**Corresponding Sec'y Kathleen Rose....
292-8912**

**Elected Directors Linda Dennis.....
733-6548**

**Jackie Scholar.....551-5045 Eric
Scholar..... 551-5045**

Nancy Williams.....291-8580

Jerry Toll..... 453-9239

David Crawford....884-1660

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Education Clem Klaphake.....292-2276

Field Trip Elliott Bedows.....292-5017

Finance Nelli Falzgraf..... ..292-9687

Fund Raising

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**Program ----- Linda Dennis.....
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Nancy Williams.... 291-8580

**Natural Areas Mgt. Eric Scholar.....
330-3888**

Publication Laurine Blankenau.451-3647

Publicity Jackie Scholar..... 551-5045

Audubon Society of Omaha

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