November 2005 Volume 34 Issue 9

ASO is a Chapter

of the National Audubon Society

Serving Eastern Nebraska

and Western Iowa

Audubon's Mammals of the West

November Meeting

New Date: Saturday, November 12,

2005

New Time: 10:45 A.M.

New Place: Joslyn Art Museum, 2200

Dodge Street

Reservations Required: 402-330-3888

By Nancy Leonard

Within a generation of the Lewis and Clark expedition, John James Audubon had produced his magnificent work, *The Birds of America*. The 435 paintings that make up this collection were notable for the lifelike poses of the birds and the natural backgrounds.

While this might have been sufficient to establish his reputation, in 1843 Audubon took a six-month trip up the Missouri River to research his next work, Quadrupeds of North America. During the course of his trip, he discovered several new species, including the Black-footed Ferret, North America's only native ferret. His trip resulted in the completion of a new portfolio, showing 180 paintings of mammals native to North America. These show the same fine attention to detail, the liveliness and sense of movement, and the background interest of his bird paintings.

Recently the Joslyn Art Museum purchased the complete collection of *Mammals* and through the end of November will have 80 of the paintings on display in a special exhibit.

Our November meeting will be held at Joslyn on November 12. We will be guided through the exhibit by Joslyn personnel who will be able to explain the paintings and point out interesting details for us.

We will meet on the lower level at 10:45 A.M. just in front of the Cafe. Entrance to the Museum is free on Saturday mornings.

Our tour will begin at 11:00 A.M. The tour will last approximately one hour, and afterwards we will meet in the cafe for coffee and snacks. After the tour you are welcome to continue to browse the museum's collection.

The size of the groups will be limited, so you must let me know if you will attend. Please call me at 402-330-3888 (leave a message if I am not at home), or email me at neleonard@gmail.com to let me know how many are coming.

Please join us for this very special opportunity. When the special exhibit is over, the pictures will be exhibited a few at a time. This will be your only chance to see so many of them at one time.

November DeSoto Field Trip

By Clem Klaphake

It is that time of year again to take our annual ASO field trip to the DeSoto National Widlife Refuge on the Nebraska-Iowa border, north of Omaha.

The date is November 19, which is also the deer hunting season for eastern Nebraska, which can sometimes affect where we can look for birds. Keeping that in mind, we will meet at 8:00 A.M. in the Neale Woods Center parking lot just to congregate for the start of the drive to the Refuge.

There is a deer hunt going on at Neale Woods at that time, thus no birding there. For those wanting to car pool, it might be best to make arrangements with someone in

Continued on page 3

Happenings

by Elliott Bedows

Honestly, now. Why not drill in the ANWR? Of all the reasons given for not touching our Natural Jewel of the North, the Last Pristine Frontier, or any other aesthetic accolade you may prefer, none of these are really the best reason to stay the heck out of our frozen Princess to the North. Rather, the real reason(s) happen to be that going into the Arctic (or Antarctic for that matter) in pursuit of natural resources will seriously compromise the future of life (both human and nonhuman) for decades to come. Let me explain.

No one, except the totally blind and those who refuse to see, can deny that global warming is occurring. But the ongoing debate is this: to what degree are humans responsible for this phenomenon? Is global warming part of a natural cycle, or are we humans to blame? And if so, to what extent? As is almost always the case, the real answer likely resides somewhere between the extremes, but nonetheless, we as human residents of our planet are significantly contributing to global warming. Why?

In the days before bipeds ruled the earth, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes and other natural events were more readily absorbed by the earth's natural biological defense systems. Now barrier islands, both domestically and abroad, that once protected coastal regions from the forces of ominous tropical storms, have been developed and no longer provide that natural buffer once enjoyed.

Systems that endured vast plumes of natural volcanic debris pumped into the earth's atmosphere daily were absorbed into sediments, ultimately to be recycled by the earth's natural ability to recycle carbon-containing compounds (the earth's buffering capacity). But these systems are becoming compromised (saturated if you prefer) by the daily output of human pollution. Thus they cannot operate as efficiently as they once did.

As a result, greenhouse gases and other contributors to global warming are occurring, and in epic proportions. For example, as this article is being written, the strongest storm ever recorded in the Atlantic basin is churning, and the third strongest ever occurred within the past month. These were Wilma and Rita, respectively, while Katrina and Stan were even more costly in human lives lost!

Water is perhaps the most miraculous of all our planet's chemicals because, in addition to its ability to float when solid (as ice - try to name another compound that shares this character), it also has the atypical ability to retain gases such as oxygen to a greater extent when waters are cold rather than warm. Thus the cold oceans support most of the earth's biomass because cold water (a very few degrees above freezing) can store more oxygen and therefore support more life-giving organisms such as algae and plankton, than can warm water.

That is also why the largest animals on earth - whales - migrate to the Bering Sea each year to eat nutrient-rich plankton growing in the far northern oceans. In comparison, the warm waters of the southern oceans are nutrient deprived. Plankton and algae are photosynthetic organisms, which means they can take the greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, and convert it to oxygen which sustains the natural cycle of the biosystem. But as the oceans continue to warm, the ability to sustain populations of these vital microorganisms diminishes.

A single major oil spill in the Arctic will continue to reduce the ability of the northern oceans to support the organisms that help keep the greenhouse gas effect in check, leading to more warming and its consequences. So all of the theoretical gains that might be realized from drilling in the Arctic quickly become offset by the pattern of major hurricanes that are beginning to occur with greater regularity (a cycle that the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration predicts will continue for nearly twenty more years! And that is without factoring in what a major kill off the Arctic microfauna might contribute.

It really is time to stop being stupid and to think about how the consequences of our collective acts influence the earth's fragile systems. Just another example of how conservation and good planning as our population increases will go a long way to improving our future.

Nominee for Board Position

Because of the change in venue for our November meeting, the election of Corresponding Secretary has been postponed to the December general meeting.

The nominee is Pauline Dickey, former Chair of the Fundraising Committee.

A Home for Hazardous Waste

The promise of a disposal site for hazardous waste in our city has become a reality and a boon for those concerned about safety and tired of clutter on the premises. The "home" is

UnderTheSink, a site presently open to Douglas and Sarpy County residents only.

We require some education before setting out for the site. The products that will be accepted are numerous. The lists below are incomplete but give you a start.

Some you may clean out of your garage or workshop include antifreeze, auto polish, automotive batteries, brake fluid, caulk, gasoline, kerosene, lighter fluid, paint, paint remover and paint thinner.

From your kitchen and bathroom, accepted are cleaning products, personal care products, polish remover, rechargeable razors and toothbrushes, syringes, and medicines. Others include pesticides, pool chemicals, garden chemicals, fertilizers, fluorescent bulbs, aerosol cans, wallpaper remover and weed killer.

UnderTheSink accepts drop-offs by appointment only. When making arrangements, it is a good idea to inquire about a certain product's acceptability. Before you leave your driveway, keep these warnings in mind:

- Products need to be in their original containers
- Household chemicals should never be mixed
- All lids need to be tightened
- Containers should be placed upright in a box, preferably one lined with plastic or paper to collect spills or leaks
- Leaking or damaged containers are to be placed

advance of arriving at Neale Woods.

We will make a few stops in the Boyer Chute area on our way to DeSoto NWR. Those who want to stay beyond noon can either bring a lunch or go into Blair to eat.

Check the weather for appropriate clothing and foot gear. In years past, we have seen Bonaparte's Gulls, Common Loon, Harlan's Red-tails, Purple Finch, Cedar Waxwing, and a variety of waterfowl and sparrows.

Questions? Call Clem at 292-2276.

inside a heavy or double plastic bag, singly.

- Unmarked containers need to be labeled.
- Boxes should be positioned in a level place in the vehicle, preferably the trunk or truck bed.
- If placed inside the car or cabin, open two windows slightly.
- Go directly to the site. Do not run errands, go to work, or park your vehicle in the sun before dropping the items off. Vapor buildup could be harmful.
- At UnderTheSink, follow signs and stop under the canopy, waiting for a staff member to load the products for you.

UnderTheSink is located at 4001 So. 120th St. Call for an appointment: 444-7465. Days are Tuesdays through Saturdays. Hours vary. At the site you will find a **Swap Shop**, where Douglas and Sarpy County residents may find free products, reducing disposal costs and saving money for the shopper. Shoppers should take only what they need to avoid multiple handling of items by UnderTheSink.

We have the following groups to thank: Nebraska Environmental Trust, Papio-Missouri NRD, NE Department of Environmental Quality, City of Omaha, Douglas County, Sarpy County Landfill, Keep Omaha Beautiful, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, Peter Kiewit Foundation, and Omaha World-Herald Foundation.

Information from *The Spectrum*, Summer 2005

Birders' Exchange

The American Birding Association is seeking donations of used binoculars, Field Trip, Continued from page field guides and other birding equipment for use in Latin America and the Caribbean for use by researchers, educators and conservationists.

> The optics and other items will be used as tools to protect our bird populations and habitat. Many of those working in the field are without the most basic equipment.

> If you have scopes, binoculars or other items that you would like to contribute, you may send them to Birders' Exchange, American Birding Association, P.O. Box 6599, Colorado Springs, CO 80934-6599. Call for information: 1 800-850-BIRD; email bex@aba.org. The items must be in good working condition.

Your tax-deductible donation would be greatly appreciated. Monetary donations are also welcome.

Response to Dam Rehab Plans for Area Sites

The Nebraska Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) held two public meetings on October 6 regarding three Watershed Site dams under review for rehabilitation alternatives.

The second meeting, held at Chalco Hills, was attended by Nelli Falzgraf and Laurine Blankenau. Plans for two sites, the Turtle Creek Watershed Site in Sarpy County and the Papillion Creek Watershed Site in Washington County, were addressed. The age of the dams, maximum historic flooding, and current and future development were considered in plans for rehabilitation. Public opinion was sought at the meetings, attended by neighbors of the sites and others.

Included below are comments by Mace Hack, Director, ASO Board, in a letter to Mr. Richard Vaughn of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Lincoln regarding the proposed projects at two of the dams, Turtle Creek and the Upper Salt Creek site in Lancaster County (the Papillion Creek site being addressed separately).

The Nebraska
Resources Conservation
Service (NRCS) held
two public meetings on
October 6 regarding
three Watershed Site
dams under review for
rehabilitation
alternatives.

The second meeting, held at Chalco Hills, was attended by Nelli Falzgraf and Laurine Blankenau. Plans for two sites, the Turtle Creek Watershed Site in Sarpy County and the Papillion Creek Watershed Site in Washington County, were addressed. The age of the dams, maximum historic flooding, and current and future development were considered in plans for rehabilitation. Public opinion was sought at the meetings, attended by neighbors of the sites and others.

Included below are comments by Mace Hack, Director, ASO Board, in a letter to Mr. Richard Vaughn of the

"Our organization strongly favors the conservation of our state's natural resources and the preservation of native ecoystems for the above watershed projects have transformed native prairie streambeds into relatively stagnant, ponded wetland areas, we favor the original free-flowing state (e.g. Federal Decommissioning Alternative).

"However, we acknowledge that current circumstances regarding downstream development may preclude this option as the most few years (e.g. head-cutting, introduction of exotic species) may similarly preclude this option as the most favorable for the state's native

"Short of complete restoration, we favor the alternative that maximizes the wildlife habitat available on each site by prohibiting de

Mace Hack is Assistant Administrator for the Wildlife Division, Nebraska Game and Parks.

Natural Resources
Conservation Service in
Lincoln regarding the
proposed projects at two
of the dams, Turtle
Creek and the Upper
Salt Creek site in
Lancaster County (the
Papillion Creek site
being addressed
separately).

Bird Seed Sale Volunteers—Thanks!

By Kathleen Crawford-Rose

Our annual bird seed sale is over, and it was truly a group effort from start to finish. When all the bills are paid, the checks counted, we should clear approximately \$6,000.00. Thanks go out to all the volunteers and customers who make this sale a success each year. We apologize if we miss anyone. We truly want to recognize the workers who made this sale a success.

Head-of-it-all - Neal Ratzlaff

Chief Assistants - Carole & Dick Rasmussen, Jerry Toll, Kathleen Crawford-Rose

Computer Program - Bill Swick

Mailing - Pauline Dickey, Earl & Marge Collins, Sam & Essie Grill, Helen Rees, Carole & Dick Rasmussen, Jenny Henricksen, Kathleen Crawford-Rose

Garages & Snacks - Neal & Izen Ratzlaff, Duane & Janice Bright, Eunice Levisay & Barbara Sennentz

Distribution Crew (loading & unloading the seed) - Jerry Toll, Crew Chief. Crew - David Nichols, Jenny Henricksen, Eric Scholar, Roy Rayner, Jim McLochlin, Dick & Carole Rasmussen, Jim &Collette Chisea, Roland Barth, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Loren & Babs Padelford, Pauline Dickey, Urban Lehner, Mace Hack, Nelli & Randy Falzgraf, Tad

Left to right: Duane Bright, Nelli Falzgraf, Randy Falzgraf, and Kathleen Crawford-Rose: some of the laborers at the Duane Bright

Rasmussen, Jerry Toll, Kathleen Left to right: Duane Bright, Nelli Falzgraf, Randy Falzgraf, and Kathleen Crawford-Rose: some of the laborers at the Duane Bright

Leeper, Greg Stoiber.

At the Sennentz & Ratzlaff garages, we also had able assistance from some Westside High students.

Leeper, Greg Stoiber.

At the Sennentz & Ratzlaff garages, we also had able assistance from some Westside High students.

Return to Wetlands

What is happening lately with the Missouri River? The heartening news is that a new program has been launched to restore more of the wetlands in the Missouri River corridor that were lost to channelization many years ago. To carry

October's Field Trip Day

By Elliott Bedows

Eighteen participants gathered at Spring Creek Prairie (**SCP**) on Saturday, Sept. 8, a truly perfect day for birding. A few of us stayed on and birded Conestoga SRA (**C**) and Pawnee out this project, \$24 million has been designated through the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program.

The Spectrum, newsletter of the Papio-Missouri NRD, reports that a number of organizations will fund and plan the project to ease the pressures on some of our most endangered species.

The habitat of Least Terns, Piping Plovers and Pallid Sturgeons along with other birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles are to be increased and preserved. Humans will gain from better water quality and recreation.

The program will require voluntary participation by landowners and Native Americans, who will be awarded financial assistance for their role in restoring and preserving wetlands. A new option of the program will be wetlands linked to upland areas. The resulting broader scope of the preserved lands will provide more benefit to wildlife than fragmented areas. One site possibly qualifying for restoration is the Lower Decature Bend in Washington County.

The partners upon whom the program depends include four Natural Resource Districts, the Nature Conservancy, Nebraska Game & Parks, and the US Army Corps of Engineers, with additional funds requested from the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

Success of the program will mean a healthier river corridor with more habitat for wildlife, bearing more resemblance to the Missouri River bequeathed us by nature.

Lake SRA (**PL**) after birding the Prairie. Kevin Poague helped me lead the trip.

Overall, we had an excellent day. Fifty-two species, including 12 species of sparrows, were identified. Among them were the following highlights:

At Spring Creek Prairie:

NORTHERN GOSHAWK (1)*

Red-shafted race of Northern Flicker

Western Kingbird (1) (late)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4)

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT (8-9)*

Tennessee Warbler (1)

Yellow-rumped Warbler (1)

Spotted Towhee (apparently `clear' male - i.e. no obvious white in the primary panels)

Vesper Sparrow (2)

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (1)

Fox Sparrow (1)

Swamp Sparrow (2)

Lincoln's Sparrow (3-4)

White-throated Sparrow (5)

White-crowned Sparrow (5+)

Harris' Sparrow (a few seen, many heard)

*lifer for some group members

After lunch we saw the following birds of note:

American White Pelican (1 - **PL**)

Double-crested Cormorant (5-C)

Long-billed Dowitcher (6-**PL**)

October's Field Trip Day

By Elliott Bedows

Eighteen

participants gathered at Spring Creek Prairie (SCP) on Saturday, Sept. 8, a truly perfect day for birding. A few of us stayed on and birded Conestoga SRA (C) and Pawnee Lake SRA (PL) after birding the Prairie. Kevin Poague helped me

lead the trip.

Overall, we had an excellent day. Fifty-two species, including 12 species of sparrows, were identified. Among them were the following highlights:

At Spring Creek Prairie:

NORTHERN GOSHAWK (1)*

Red-shafted race of Northern Flicker

Western Kingbird (1) (late)

Rubycrowned Kinglet (4)

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT (8-9)*

Tennessee Warbler (1)

Yellowrumped Warbler (1)

Spotted
Towhee
(apparently
`clear' male i.e. no
obvious
white in the
primary
panels)

Vesper Sparrow (2)

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (1)

Fox Sparrow (1)

Swamp Sparrow (2)

Lincoln's Sparrow (3-4)

Whitethroated Sparrow (5)

Whitecrowned Sparrow (5+)

What We Can Do

Disappearing Forests

By Kathy Schwery

Many of our members may recall reading the article in the September/October *Audubon Magazine* regarding destruction of the last remaining boreal forests of North America.

Nearly half of the regularly occurring birds on the North American continent use Canada's boreal forests either for breeding or as home habitat. According to the article, these forests are being destroyed at the rate of five acres a minute to provide wood and wood products for the United States.

Through carbon sequestration, forests are invaluable in their ability to slow global warming. Logging obviously removes the trees which would absorb carbon; fragmenting of the forests causes ground cover to be killed off, and the decomposing soil releases even more carbon into the atmosphere.

The conservation committee of the Audubon Society of Omaha is very

Finding Inspiration in Nature -

Programs at Spring Creek Prairie

If you have a feeling for nature, a yen to be creative, and are seeking inspiration, you may find it at Spring Creek Prairie in one of the fall classes offered.

The first of these is titled "By Nature's Design: Pursuing Natural Shapes and Patterns on the Prairie." Sat, Nov. 5, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. \$6 per person. You will explore new ways of seeing the natural world. Learning to recognize and identify the basic shapes and patterns that recur in nature can help make sense of what may seem like a chaotic system. Patterns in nature have also influenced human design in the arts, architecture and engineering.

Participants will develop observation and prediction skills while finding examples of patterns along the beautiful trails of Spring Creek Prairie. Time will be included for expressing their creativity using natural shapes and patterns as inspiration.

For ages 10 and older. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Preregister by Thurs Nov 3. Class sizes are limited;

*lifer for some group members

Sparrow (a few seen,

Harris'

After lunch we saw the following birds of note:

American
White
Pelican (1 PL)

Double-crested
Cormorant
(5-C)

Long-billed Dowitcher (6-**PL**)

concerned about this loss of forest habitat for birds, as well as the negative impact on climate caused by massive logging.

As consumers, there are some things we can do. Cancel all catalogs which you do not use and have not requested. Buy recycled tissue and printing paper.

Write to the Prime Minister of Canada urging him to protect more of the boreal forest. Write to the paper companies encouraging them to use recycled content in their paper products. Addresses are below:

Prime Minister of Canada

The Honorable Paul Martin

Office of the Prime Minister

80 Wellington Street, 2nd Floor

Ottawa, ON

Canada KIA OA2

Mr. Lance Lamers

Kimberly-Clark Corporation

P.O. Box 2020

Neenah, WI 54957-2020

register early at 402-797-2301.

The second class, "Nature Journaling for Adults," will be held Sat, Nov. 12, 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m, \$7 per person. You will spend the morning practicing new approaches to nature journaling, while hiking the prairie trails.

Hone your observation skills while taking a lesson from Mother Nature. Wind down from the bustle of daily life and prepare for more reflective times as winter draws near. The afternoon will include an outside solo journaling experience.

The class is designed for those 16 and older. Participants should dress for the weather and bring a sack lunch and their own journals, but writing materials will be available for those who need them. Beverages will be provided. Space is limited. Preregister by Fri, Nov. 11: 402-797-2301.

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: 7602 Pacific St, #205, 68114

Senator Chuck Hagel

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

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

Omaha phone: (402) 758-8981

Representative Lee Terry

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

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

Audubon Society

Membership Application

The *Audubon Magazine**(see below, chapter-only membership) and your membership card will be sent to this address:

Name			
		State	
Zip Code	Phone:		
Email:			

Introductory Membership

National Audubon & Local Chapter

(1st & 2nd Year \$20)

Make check payable to National Audubon Society

Chapter-only Membership: \$15

(No National Audubon Magazine)

Make check payable to Audubon Society of Omaha

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha

19612 Ridgeway Road

Plattsmouth NE 68048

PO 3

226-5452 **7XCH**

Omaha phone: (402) 397-9944

Representative Jeff Fortenberry

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

Phone: (202) 225-4806

Lincoln phone: (402) 438-1598

Governor Dave Heineman

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848 Lincoln, NE 68509

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

Memorials

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

When sending your 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 68103-0542

Bequests

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

Audubon Society of Omaha, Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103-05

Phone: 451-3647 - http://audubon-omaha.org

Elected Officers: Standing Committee

1st Vice President Jackie Program Nancy Leonard.....330-3888 Scholar....551-5045

2nd Vice President Laurine
Blankenau.....451-3647

Publication Laurine
Blankenau.....451-3647

Publicity Jackie Scholar.....551-5045
Treasurer Patty Albright.....323-1966

Past President Nelli Falzgraf.....292- Other Activities:

9687

Recording Secretary Linda

Dannie 733 6548

Dennis.....733-6548 Carol Rasmussen.....731-3939

Elected Directors Jenny Henricksen.....895-5487 Speakers Bureau Eunice Levisay.....393-0545

8912

Historian Kathleen Rose.....292-8912

Bird Seed Sale Co-Chairs Kathleen Rose..... 292-

Mace Hack.....934-5040 Birdathon Chair Bechara Embaid,,,,,965-9598 Mark Armstrong.....292-9770 ASO State Board Rep. Mace Hack.....934-5040 NAS Board Member Ione Werthman..... 493-0373 **Urban Lehner.....330-3888** Sharon Draper.....572-4026 Tad The Meadowlark is published Leeper.....593-8508 monthly September through May, plus a summer issue. The newsletter **Standing Committee Chairpersons:** may be accessed on our web site, Conservation Tad Leeper.....593-8508 http://audubon-omaha.org **Education Brian Jensen....333-6375** Send address changes to Kathy Schwery, 19612 Ridgeway Road, Field Trip Clem Klaphake.....292-Plattsmouth NE 68048. 2276 Finance Nelli Falzgraf.....292-9687 Fund Raising Mace Hack......934-**5040** Hospitality DwanDean Leach.....346-**5769** Membership Kathy Schwery.....296-4788 **Natural Areas Mgt. Eric** Scholar.....551-5045 **Omaha Raptor Team Jenny** Henricksen.....895-5487 **Audubon Society of Omaha Non-Proft Organization** U.S. Postage

P. O. Box 3542

Omaha NE 68103--0542

Paid

OMAHA, **NEBRASKA**

PERMIT NO. 79