

April 2004

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**ASO is a Chapter
of the National Audubon
Society
Serving Eastern
Nebraska
and Western Iowa**

Our Beautiful Spring Warblers

In the springtime, birders can be found in the forests, craning their necks for a view into the treetops, trying to locate and identify warblers. These small, very active, brightly plumaged songsters can be difficult to identify as they flit from branch to branch, drop or ascend. We can narrow the options by studying their songs and plumage colors and by noting their habitat and behavior.

Just in time for spring migration, our speaker for the April 8 general meeting, Eunice Levisay, will present a program on warblers. Included will be the regular spring migrant found in our area, those which stay to nest, and some from more distant parts of the country. Eunice will give us general descriptions of warblers, discuss how they got their names, and include tips on where to find them.

Warblers are a favorite species for Eunice. She has taken birding trips to High Island, Texas, to view migrating war

By Kathy Schwery

blers as they come across the Gulf of Mexico and to Point Pelee, Ontario, to see these hardy travelers as they find land after crossing Lake Erie.

Eunice is a former elementary teacher who spent 35 years in the classroom. A longtime member of the Audubon Society of Omaha, she also belongs to four antique groups and the Ivy League Garden Club, which sponsored the butterfly garden at the Heron Haven wetland site. Eunice regularly tends this garden where the beautiful blooms and abundant butterflies attest to her skills as a nature gardener. She frequently gives presentations on butterflies, birds and antiques.

Join us Thursday, April 8, 7:30 P.M. at Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St. A brief business meeting will follow the program, after which coffee and cookies will be served. Nonmembers are welcome.

Spring Bird Counts

**DeSoto and Sarpy County
DeSoto Count - Saturday, May 1**

The DeSoto Count coordinator is Bob Barry, who will assign persons to the various sectors.

If you can serve on this important count, contact Bob at 642-5404. If you have a choice of sector, please let him know.

Southeast Nebraska and Kansas Field Trip

By Clem Klaphake

The ASO April field trip will be an overnight birding route through several southeast Nebraska sites and Kansa Prairie south of Manhattan, Kansas. We will leave Saturday morning, April 24, spend the night in Manhattan, and return Sunday afternoon, April 25. It is possible we should be able to see many of the passerine migrants that haven't quite

reached the Omaha area by this April date.

We will stop at such places as Burchard Lake WMA in Pawnee County, Tuttle Creek Reservoir in Kansas, and Konsa Prairie on Sunday morning to bird. This should be an exciting trip and one with a wide variety of species seen along the way.

For an accurate count, sufficient persons are needed to cover these large areas, so your help is needed and would be greatly appreciated. You need not have expert knowledge to be of help, and you will be teamed up with one or more experienced birders.

Sarpy County Count - Saturday, May 8

(See page 5)

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Nelli's Notes

By Nelli Falzgraf

"Birding Nebraska"

Past President of the Nebraska Ornithologist Union, Janis Paseka, wrote about "Birding Nebraska," a recent issue of *Nebraskaland Magazine*, that will surely open us to spring and the anticipation of looking for migratory birds. "This 178-page issue is nothing less than spectacular. It's more a book than a magazine and a bargain at \$12.95 if you don't already subscribe to the magazine. It begins with a history of birding in Nebraska (and of the NOU) and proceeds to cover the state, region by region, with information on what birds are likely to be found there, what the local hotspots are, and what the history of the area is. There are sidebars on Snow vs Ross' Geese, the bone structure of birds, migration corridors, colloquial bird names, and many other topics. It concludes with an annotated checklist of the birds of Nebraska. And it is, above all else, simply beautiful. The photography is outstanding, world class. Jon Farrar is to be commended on a job exceedingly well done. Thank you to Jon, to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and to all the birders in the state who contributed."

Nebraska is a good place to find birds because we're located about the center of North America, where various ecosystems meet, and along the flyways of birds migrating between their

Contact Pauline Dickey at 932-8205 to purchase a copy of "Birding Nebraska." The cost is \$10 for members, \$13 for nonmembers.

The Boreal Songbird Network

National Audubon sends this timely message about Canada's boreal (coniferous) forest.

Stretching from Alaska to the Atlantic, this forest is one of the world's largest at 1.3 billion acres (larger than the Brazilian Amazon). It has more fresh water than any place on earth and provides vital nesting habitat for a third of North America's land birds and 40% of its waterfowl.

In December 2003, the Boreal Conservation Framework proposed establishing a network of large interconnected and protected areas covering half of the boreal region, and the use of sustainable development practices in the remaining areas. This reflects an alliance of conservation organizations, First Nations, and timber and oil companies who have signed on to the Framework (website: www.borealcanada.ca).

Much of the boreal region is unspoiled, but development is escalating and land use decisions in Canada will determine

wintering and nesting grounds. The magazine covers birding areas by ecoregions, partly for our convenience and partly because each specie has specific requirements to succeed and maintain a viable population. The the future of the region for the next three years. Much of the resource development is driven by U.S. consumption, and we're the leading importer of Canadian forest products (like paper), and oil and gas.

Our region in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa is at the western edge of the eastern deciduous forest, and the valleys drain into the Missouri or its tributaries. It was settled and cultivated by the 1870's, which changed the woodlands, grasses, and wetlands that provide cover, nesting areas, and food for birds. An international campaign focused in the U.S. is emerging. The Boreal Songbird Network is a new network of conservation groups that include the Boreal Songbird Initiative, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the American Bird Conservancy. These groups are working to build a broad base of support for boreal conservation.

The Missouri was once a wide-ranging river that meandered, had ebbs and flows from spring snow melt that deposited sandbars used by birds such as Least Terns and Piping Plovers. It left chutes and oxbows that supported a myriad of insects and other invertebrates that sustained birds and fish such as the Pallid Sturgeon. The river has since been straightened, shortened, and deepened, with much of the flood plain drained, farmed, or developed. For more information on how you can help protect the boreal forest, please visit the Boreal Songbird Initiative website at www.borealbirds.org.

Humans brought different trees, shrubs, and forbs to the area, and eastern deciduous forests and birds adapted to them have flourished. Some, such as the Prothonotary Warbler and Pileated Woodpecker, had vanished but have now returned.

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April - May Events

Apr 5 (Mon) Conservation Meeting

Apr 7 (Wed) Board Meeting

Apr 8 (Thur) General Meeting

Apr 24-25 (Sat-Sun)

May 1 (Sat) DeSoto Bird Count

May 8 (Sat) Sarpy County Bird Count

May 13 (Thur) Spring Banquet

April Field Trip, Continued from page 1

We will meet in the southeast corner of the Southroads Shopping Mall in Bellevue at 7:30 a.m. April 24. Bring a lunch and drinks with you for Saturday because we will be eating in a park or WMA in southeast Nebraska. If you can, you might want to find someone to carpool with ahead of time so you won't have to leave your vehicle at Southroads.

We will stay in Manhattan overnight, so you need to make a reservation at a motel on your own. I will stay at the Super 8, but if you have other preferences, there is a Comfort Inn just across the street, as well as many others in the city. Saturday night you can choose your own place for dinner because there are many choices

Spring Banquet - 2004

Mark Thursday, May 13, on your calendar for the annual ASO banquet. Once again we will get together at Johnny's Steakhouse on L Street for the dinner, camaraderie, and presentation.

The celebration will begin with a social hour at 6:00 p.m. followed by a buffet dinner at 7:00 p.m.

This year we are pleased and honored to have ASO past president Dr. Neal Ratzlaff as our guest speaker. His talk will be followed by presentation of awards and remarks. ASO officers will

in this university town.

be installed.

Bring appropriate clothing and shoes to fit the season. We will do some walking at Konsa Prairie, but you will have the option of staying in a more flat wooded stream area or a longer uphill open prairie walk that circles back through this wooded flat area. There are some spectacular views of this huge prairie when you take the longer walk. Also, bring water with you in a comfortable carrying pack.

The cost of the dinner including dessert is \$17.00 per person. Please return the reservation form at the bottom of this page with your check payable to ASO and mail to Jackie Scholar, 5012 Nicholas Street, Omaha NE 68132, by May 10.

Hope to see you there!

If you have any questions, contact Clem Klaphake (292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net.)

a new strategy is shaping up. We are asking for your participation in any way you find possible. The Birdathon should not be the only way we band together for a goal. Our participation should be continuous and fun, and you can help insure our success.

Birdathon 2004 - Audubon Counts on You!

By Bechara Embaid

It's Birdathon time again. So what's new this year? Frankly, quite a lot.

We have a new board of directors, a new president, and

This year we will conduct the Birdathon for one week extending from May 8, which coincides with the Sarpy County Spring Count, to May 15, International Bird Migration day.

You will be receiving a flyer about the Birdathon. Please join us in our traditional yearly activity and stay tuned to help in the success of our society.



May 13 Cash bar 6:00 pm. Dinner 7:00

Name _____

Phone _____

Address

Number and Street City State Zip

Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ reservations.

The cost is \$17 per person. Make checks payable to ASO and mail to Jackie Scholar, 5012 Nicholas St, Omaha 68132.

Reservations must be received by May 10.

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By Ione Werthman

Conservation/Legislative Action

Raising the Volume

Time Magazine of the week of March 19 reports that Senator Kerry and President Bush are raising the volume in the presidential campaign, even though it's only March. What are some of the issues, we as environmentalists, see being raised?

LB 962 Water Policy - The volume pertaining to water policy in Nebraska is getting louder every day. Not only do we need to speak out on the Missouri River final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Platte River Draft EIS, but in the State Legislature, LB 962, which aims to resolve conflicts between surface water and groundwater users, is raising the volume too.

Who has a higher priority — farmers who draw water from a stream or those who pump from wells? Who gets the water when demand exceeds the amount of water available? Who should have priority in setting the rules and resolving these conflicts, the State Department of

conflicts between the irrigators, at press time LB 962 has passed the first of three rounds of debate necessary for passage in the legislature. The compromise portion of the Bill provides for \$1.5 million of state general funds next year, and another \$1 million or so would be expected income as a grant from the Environmental Trust Fund. However, with state coffers almost depleted, some lawmakers question whether the compromise will hold in the next round of debate as hearings on the battle of the budget will be debated first. Senator Chris Beutler, Lincoln, and Senator Ed Schrock of Elm Creek have proposed that the irrigators themselves should pay for the program by paying fees on their wells.

Ailing Nebraska Environmental

Trust Funds

The proposed constitutional amendment, LR 209CA, is still in the hopper and has now advanced to select file by a vote of 30-14. This Bill would direct about \$2 million a year from the Environmental

Natural Resources, which now regulates only surface water from lakes, streams and rivers, or the regional Natural Resources Districts, which are responsible for regulating only groundwater uses? We're back to the issue of conjunctive use of our water.

It has taken our Legislature many, many years to admit the interconnection of groundwater and surface water and to legislate accordingly. Related policy issues appear rather recently because of the assumed abundance of groundwater and a minimum of conflicts or competition between users. As recently as 1997, the Nebraska League of Women Voters produced a book, *Nebraska's Water, Nebraska's Wealth - Choices and Challenges*, because they could see these issues arising. I participated in this project and we have this book in our ASO Office Library, if you want to learn more. Let me know when you want to check it out.

The Nebraska Supreme Court is now hearing arguments in a lawsuit on the issue of groundwater vs surface water irrigation because of the dry bed of Pumpkin Creek in Western Nebraska. The Spear T Ranch, which receives its surface irrigation water from the Creek, is asking \$4 million in damages from upstream landowners who have pumped groundwater for irrigation and allegedly depleted the aquifer which sustained Pumpkin Creek.

With an added compromise in LB 962 stating who would pay for instigating the changes and resolving

Trust Fund to bail out the Nebraska State Fair.

Add to that LR 11CA, Casinos in Nebraska. The gambling measure bill in the Legislature, as it is now written, would allow up to two casinos in Nebraska with local options but control in the Legislature. This Bill remains on select file and Senator Janssen has designated it as his priority Bill, so it should go at least one or two more rounds. If passed, it would go to the voters in November. We must remember that there are also four gambling petitions being circulated now, which could be placed on the November ballot. None of the petitions would give the Legislature any control. If any of these gambling bills pass, I believe it would serve to kill our Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund. Lottery funds will fall by the wayside and casino gambling would take over.

In a February 7 op ed in the *Omaha World Herald*, Francis Moul, an environmental historian and retired newspaper publisher, wrote, "Nebraska voters approved a constitutional amendment in 1992 to establish the state lottery, with proceeds to be used for education, an environmental trust, and for the treatment of compulsive gamblers. Currently 49.5 percent of lottery proceeds go to each of the two funds and 1 percent goes to aid compulsive gamblers.

Continued on page 5

Sarpy Bird Count, Continued from page 1

Clem Klaphake is organizing the Sarpy Count again this year and is looking for volunteers to help. Half-day or all-day counters are welcome as are both veteran birders and novices. Clem will have at least one experienced birder leading each of the groups in the field.

The county is usually divided into 4

Helpers Wanted for Easy Task

We have a regular, faithful crew of persons who help fold the newsletter each month, September - May, plus a summer issue. The work takes place at the ASO office, Heron Haven, 11809 Old Maple Road. The work takes about one and a half hours, and workers need not be available each month.

The company is congenial, which makes this

sectors (but that can depend on how many volunteers come forward). Generally the sectors run north and south from Douglas County in the north to the Platte River in the south, and from the Missouri River in the east to the Elkhorn and Platte Rivers in the west.

If you are interested, contact Clem Klaphake at 292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net and he will put you in touch with a sector leader.

Conservation & Legislative Action, Cont. from page 4

After lottery expenses and prize money are deducted, that means almost \$10 million a year each to the environment and education." However, although the original constitutional amendment specified how the money was to be spent, it was left up to the Legislature to fill in the details.

What one session can do, another can undo. And that is exactly what has happened in the past two years. First, the Environmental Trust paid out nearly \$1 million for legal fees in the water lawsuit with Wyoming, and last August the legislators took another \$2.8 million and gave it to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality for legal fees in the low-level radioactive waste lawsuit.

Contacting your State Senator is now critical. Urge the Senator to oppose using Environmental Trust Funds to pay for everything. We designated the money to only the Environment and Education in the original amendment, not the kitchen sink.

Senator _____ District # _____ ,
State Capitol, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln
NE 68509-4604.

The volume will soon get louder on the Missouri

River issues as a coalition of ten environmental groups are planning to take the Corps of Engineers to court this spring. I will be contacting you soon for your help with an Action Alert on the Platte River DEIS.

Our next Conservation/Legislative Action meeting will be held April 5, 2004, at the ASO Office. Join us to keep abreast of issues.

a way to meet friends while performing a service that saves ASO about \$1,000 a year.

Please call Shirley Noar, 556-7253, or Laurine Blankenau, 451-3647, if you can give us some of your time. Your help would be appreciated.

Phone Volunteer Wanted

ASO is looking for someone to do phoning that doesn't require selling or asking favors.

It would require contacting those whose memberships have expired recently, asking why they chose not to renew, keeping record of the reasons given, and providing these to the president and membership committee. The number of persons to call each time would be fairly small.

Please call President Nelli Falzgraf, 292-9687, if you can help.

Tee Shirts With New ASO Logo

You may order new shirts by calling me or completing an order at the general meeting. Include size, color, 100% cotton or /50-50 blend, and long or short sleeves with your name and phone number. Cost is \$10 short sleeve, \$14 long sleeve, payable at time of delivery. List of colors has

been included in the past two issues of *Meadowlark*; look at the catalog at the General Meeting or come by my house.

The new tees may be available at the next general meeting. I will also have ASO caps with the



logo
embroidered
on the front
for sale at
the next
meeting. The
caps should
be about
\$14.00.

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Make Your Yard Bird Friendly

With 'Audubon At Home'

Here is something new from National Audubon, just in time for that pleasant (some would say daunting) work of whipping your yard into shape. Which of us wouldn't want a yard the birds are at home in and that is safe for humans. The following and much more can be found on their web site, www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/index.html>.

Our back yards are private spaces but also part of a larger landscape we share with our human and wildlife neighbors. With the right tools and information, we all can do simple things to create a healthier place to live for our families, our communities, birds, plants and other wildlife.

Audubon At Home is about taking personal conservation action to improve the environmental health and habitat quality of our yards and neighborhoods. Together, our actions can have a substantial effect.

Explore the Audubon At Home links and resources here for the information, and inspiration, to make conservation actions a part of your everyday life - at home and in your community.

5 Simple Actions....Can make a world of difference.

Reduce pesticide use. Nearly 3/4 of all U.S. households use some type of pesticide, often unnecessarily. Learn more about pesticide risks and healthier alternatives.

pollution of our waterways. and water bodies. Do you know a quart of oil dumped down a storm drain can cause an oil slick two acres in size? Learn more...

Remove exotic plant pests. Purple loosestrife, English ivy, kudzu, Japanese honeysuckle, and other familiar plants pose a growing threat to native wildlife. Read more....

To explore these and other questions, click on the web address www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/index.html>

Or access

www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/audubon_home_website.html>.



Other Downloadable Resources:

- .. Audubon and the USDA's NRCS partner to improve backyard habitat.
- .. Plants for Birds and Wildlife
- .. Keeping Wildlife Safe
- .. Kidspace
- .. Audubon Guide for a Healthy Yard and Beyond

Recommended reading: *The Bird Garden*, by Stephen W. Kress, with a foreword by Roger Tory Peterson; and *The Audubon Society Guide to Attracting Birds*, also by Stephen Kress. Available at libraries,

Conserve water. Nearly 8 billion gallons of water are used daily in the U.S. for outdoor purposes, mostly landscaping. Read more about the role you can take in water conservation.

bookstores and birding supply stores.

Protect water quality. Storm water runoff is a leading cause of

Plant native species. What are native plants? Why are they important to birds and other wildlife? Read more.

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:

Audubon Society

Membership Application
The *Audubon Magazine**(see below,

chapter-only membership) and your

membership card will be sent to this address:

Name_____

Street_____

City_____State_____

Zip Code_____Phone:_____

Email:_____

Introductory Membership

National Audubon & Local Chapter

(1st & 2nd Year \$20)

Chapter-only Membership: \$15

(No National Audubon Magazine)

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha

11809 Old Maple Road

Omaha NE 68164

PO 3

7XCH

(202) 226-5452

Omaha phone: (402) 397-
9944

Representative Douglas
Bereuter

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

Phone: (202) 225-4806; fax
(202) 225-5686

Lincoln phone: (402) 438-
1598

Governor Michael Johanns

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.

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.

**Audubon Society of Omaha, 11809 Old Maple Road,
Omaha 68164**

Phone: 445-4138 - <http://audubon-omaha.org>

Elected Officers:

President Nelli Falzgraf, 414 Ridgewood Dr, Bellevue 68005 292-9687

1st Vice President Elliott Bedows, 309 Greenbrier Ct, Bellevue 68005 292-5017

2nd Vice President Laurine Blankenau, 3808 Grebe, Omaha 68112 451-3647

Treasurer Vacant

Past President Eric Scholar, 5012 Nicholas St, Omaha 68132 551-5045

Recording Secretary Linda Dennis, 1011 Homer St, Omaha 68107 733-6548

Elected Directors Jackie Scholar, 5012 Nicholas St, Omaha 68132 551-5045

Mace Hack, 1735 So. 87th St, Omaha 68124 934-5040

Mark Armstrong, 12741 Forestdale Dr, Omaha 68123 292-9770

Bob Fuchs, 1113 Dillon Dr, Omaha 68132 553-8242

Sharon Draper, 6220 Kansas Ave, Omaha 68104 572-4026

Clem Klaphake, 707 Garden Ave, Bellevue 68005 292-2276

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Conservation Ione Werthman, 11649 Burt St, #011, Omaha 68154 493-0373

Education Brian Jensen, 12430 Bel Drive, Omaha NE 68144 333-6375

Field Trip Clem Klaphake, 707 Garden Ave, Bellevue 68005 292-2276

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Hospitality DwanDean Leach, 3006 Poppleton, Omaha 68105 346-5769

Membership Bechara Embaid, 3218 No. 120th Court Apt. 221, Omaha 68164 965-9598

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Publicity Kathy Schwery, 3616 So 96th St, Omaha 68124 397-7343

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Naturestudy Vacant

Bird Seed Sale Co-Chairs Kathleen Rose, 123 Bellevue Blvd So, Bellevue 68005 292- 8912

Carol Rasmussen, 4503 So. 16th St, Omaha 68107 731-3939

Historian Kathleen Rose, 123 Bellevue Blvd So, Bellevue 68005 292-8912

Audubon Nebr Director Don Helmuth, 5000 Central Park Dr, Suit 101 Lincoln 402 466-1220

ASO State Board Rep. Mace Hack, 1735 So. 87th St, Omaha 68124 934-5040

NAS Board Member Ione Werthman, 11640 Burt St, #011, Omaha 68154 493-0373

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