

# The Meadowlark

The Audubon Society of Omaha is dedicated to the active promotion of environmental awareness to our community through education, conservation, and enjoyment of our natural heritage, especially birds.



March 2013  
Volume 42; Issue 3

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

## **March General Meeting: The Loess Hills-Seen Through the Eyes of a Lands Manager**

By Jer Toll

Sometimes what is considered commonplace is, in reality, unique. Such is the case for we who live in the metro area. Our twin cities are nestled in the Loess Hills that is bisected by the Missouri River Valley. The Hills we live in are composed of windblown fine-grained dust deposited after the last glacial event.

The loess is more than 200 feet deep in places, making it second only to one other place on earth in China. When driving on I-29, it is easy to imagine driving near mountains by their appearance, but in perspective, The Loess Hills are only up to 400 feet high. Wind and water have eroded the Hills, creating unique biological islands isolated from similar conditions. The extremely steep and dry cliff faces harbor plants and invertebrates in unique biotic communities not found elsewhere in Iowa.

The speaker at our March meeting, Chad Graeve, knows the Hills well. He has spent his career

thinking, wondering, exploring and protecting the Loess Hills in Iowa. Chad is the Natural Resources Specialist for the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board overseeing the preservation and management of the county park system.

Chad has a vision of restoring natural areas in the Loess Hills. He will speak about the work being done for natural areas in the Loess Hills and specifically the management work and vision for Hitchcock Nature Center. He will provide a review of the Conservation Plan and Inventory that was investigated and put into place at Hitchcock over the past few years that was in part funded by a grant from ASO. He will include an introduction to some species of invertebrates previously unknown in the state of Iowa and identified during the inventory. Chad stated that "Without the financial assistance of ASO, we would continue to be unaware of their existence".

Please plan to attend this interesting program at our general meeting **Thursday, March 14th, at 7 pm** at Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St (one block south of 45th and Center). The program will be followed by a brief business

meeting and social hour with cookies. Everyone is welcome to attend, and there is no cost.

Bring your dead batteries of all kinds, print cartridges and no-longer-useable small electronics for recycling to the meeting.

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## **March Field Trip**

The next field trip will be Saturday, March 16th at Carter Lake.

We will meet at the first parking area off of Carter Lake Dr. (if coming from Omaha on Abbott Rd. it will be a left turn) at 9am. Be sure to bring optics (a scope really comes in handy here), good shoes, a hat, and warm clothing as it could still be quite cool. We will be scanning for ducks and other various waterfowl.

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## **Slate of Candidates for ASO Board**

Election of officers and directors will be held at the April general meeting.

*Continued on page 3 ...*

**Volume 2- Hummel Park**

By Justin Rink

Nestled within the hills of the Missouri River valley of northern Douglas County lies Hummel Park. This interesting little park near Florence is one of the area's best known. It is not known by most residents for the birding potential, but for the dark, violent, and supposedly supernatural history that this place has. But urban legends and folklore have very little to do with the birding aspect of this area.

In Douglas Co. this is a very reliable spot for observing "southeastern" bird species. For example, during all times of the year Tufted Titmice may be observed in winter flocks or family groups foraging within the woodland. Summer Tanagers also call Hummel Park their summer home. Their robin-like song and distinctive pik-a-tuk call hurdles down from the thick canopy. Scarlet Tanagers with their burrier song and distinctive plumage breed in this area as well. Broad-winged Hawks will sometimes be spotted flying high above the canopy announcing their presence with a long drawn-out whistle. A few years ago this was the spot in Omaha area aside from Fontenelle Forest for catching a glimpse at a brilliant Cerulean Warbler. For reasons unknown, these birds have vacated the area. Kentucky Warbler also used to call Hummel Park its summer home.

Why is this area so popular with birds? Some may say it is the close proximity to the Missouri River. That is only one aspect, however. The mature riparian forest that makes up the park is a major factor. Bur Oak and Walnut Trees over 100 years old adorn the majority of the park property. This old growth attracts many breeding species such as the aforementioned tanagers, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and Baltimore Orioles. Due to the abundance trees of varying age, woodpeckers are also quite common. Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, Red-headed Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers call Hummel Park their home. Not far down the road, Pileated Woodpeckers have been observed at N.P. Dodge Park in recent years.

During spring migration a myriad of different passerines can be seen passing through Hummel Park on their way to the northern breeding grounds. These include species such as Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll, and Magnolia Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Least Flycatcher to name a few.

During the winter months, several year-round residents are quite common here. Hummel Park is also a very reliable spot during the coldest times of the year to find Winter Wren. Often these birds will hang out along the creek near the Ponca Road entrance. Their diagnostic Song Sparrow-like "jimp" calls may be audible near branch tangles overhanging the creek. Other more common over wintering species such as American Tree

Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos may also be found quite reliably in Hummel during the winter. A Bald Eagle or two soaring along the frozen Missouri Valley is also no stranger to this park during the winter.

For a unique woodland experience any time of the year, head out to Hummel Park. This century-old park has revealed its avian secrets to many, and you just may find a few yourself.

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One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of a March thaw, is the spring. A cardinal, whistling spring to a thaw but later finding himself mistaken, can retrieve his error by resuming his winter silence. A chipmunk, emerging for a sunbath but finding a blizzard, has only to go back to bed. But a migrating goose, staking two hundred miles of black night on the chance of finding a hole in the lake, has no easy chance for retreat. His arrival carries the conviction of a prophet who has burned his bridges.  
**Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac**

## 3

## Slate of Candidates for ASO Board

...continued from page 1

Election of officers and directors will be held at the April general meeting.

The slate of candidates who will take office July 1, 2013, follows:

President – TBA

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President – Dennis

Kingery

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President – Tad Leeper

Treasurer – TBA

Recording Secretary – Nelli

Falzgraf

Corresponding Secretary – Ann Boice

Director – Helen Bartee

Director - Elliott Bedows - for 2nd two-year term

All members present at the April 11 general meeting are eligible to vote.

Any member may present a candidate at this meeting, with prior approval of the candidate.

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### HELP IS NEEDED

Help is needed for the ASO Student Art Contest! This very

successful and rewarding community event requires a lot of volunteer time in order to be a success. Can you volunteer a few hours of your time to help? We still need help on **Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>** between 9:00 AM and noon to hang the artwork at Bellevue University. We also need volunteers on **Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>** from noon until 3:00 PM to greet the families, teachers, and children coming in to view the artwork.

**Please contact Jackie Scholar @ 402 551 5045 or [jbscholar@cox.net](mailto:jbscholar@cox.net) if you can help.**

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### Organizer Needed for Photo Contest

Eric Scholar is requesting a person to organize the photo contest he has conducted for the past several years. The entries, in four or five categories, are displayed at the May banquet, with prizes awarded.

The entries have been a popular part of the evening's enjoyment; it is hoped that it can continue.

If the contest is to be held again this year, a volunteer is required; Eric will not be conducting it. For information and to discuss the contest, call Eric at 402-551-5045.

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### BIRD SEED SALE VOLUNTEERS— THANKS!!

Our 32nd annual bird seed sale is over and it was truly a group effort from start to finish. When all the bills are paid and the checks counted, we should clear approximately \$4,500.00. Thanks go out to all the volunteers and customers who make this sale a success each year. We apologize if we miss anyone but we would really like to recognize the workers who made this sale a success.

Head-of-it-all Neal Ratzlaff  
Chief assistants: Carole and Dick Rasmussen, Jerry Toll, Kathleen Crawford-Rose  
Computer Backup & Labels: Duane Schwery

*continued on page 6*

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## Bird Identification Class

8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

\$25.00 for all 3 classes

### Part 1

MARCH 16<sup>th</sup>

Wetlands Learning Center Fontenelle Forest

### Part 2

APRIL 13<sup>th</sup>

Wetlands Learning Center Fontenelle Forest

### Part 3

MAY 4<sup>th</sup>

Wetlands Learning Center Fontenelle Forest

With over 50 million 'birders' in the U.S., bird watching is the fastest growing outdoor activity today. Led by Clem Klaphake and Justin Rink, past president and current president respectively, of the Audubon Society of Omaha, this class includes local field trips designed to teach you how to identify the birds in your backyard or any other location you might encounter them, use of field guides and use of binoculars. No prior knowledge of bird identification is needed. If you are interested, contact Clem Klaphake at 402-292-2276 or [ckavian@cox.net](mailto:ckavian@cox.net) to register. For ages 12 and up. The class is limited to 15 people.

## Climate Change: A 21st Century Challenge

by Clem Klaphake

Have you given much thought to what the effects of climate change might be, or how much you know about the topic? It is a topic that has already affected all of us whether we know it, or want to acknowledge it. In early February of 2013, Neal Ratzlaff and I along with 250 other people attended an 8-hour conference at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln entitled National Climate Assessment: U.S. Global Change Research Program.

In 1990 Congress passed The Global Change Research Act which requires an assessment report at least every four years on climate change. The federal government is responsible for producing these reports through the U.S. Global Change Research Program, a collaboration of 13 federal science agencies. A 60-member federal advisory committee has been charged with developing the National Climate Assessment (NCA) report and recommendations about the ongoing assessment process. The report is being written by 240 authors drawn from academia; local, state and federal government; the private sector; and the non-profit sector. This committee is not set up to make policy - only to collect and assess data and present a report. This was made clear to all of us - the Report is turned over to Congress where policy on the assessment results will be determined.

The meeting we attended was the National Climate Assessment Great Plains Regional Town Hall Meeting. This advisory committee has divided the U.S. into 8 regions: Great Plains, Midwest, Southeast and Caribbean, Northeast, Hawaii and Pacific Islands, Southwest, Northwest, and Alaska and Arctic. It is easy to see why the committee would divide up the country by geographic regions and hold a town hall meeting in each location. For example, if increasing earth temperature is one dimension of climate change, think how different regions would be impacted - Phoenix vs. Minneapolis vs. Scottsbluff vs. Miami vs. Bangor vs. Fairbanks vs. New Orleans.

The purpose of the gathering was to get input on a Draft of the Third Climate Change Assessment Report. We were given access to the draft (300 pages) on-line previous to the meeting. Part of our time was spent in break-out groups discussing assessment issues related to a specific topic or area of concern. The topics/areas were agriculture, water, health, ecosystems, urban development, energy, food, forests, invasive species, oceans/marine life, coastal areas, and conservation. Our focus was not on what to do about climate change, but how do we inform, educate, and disperse information to the general population in the U.S.

As you know, there are many people who would argue there is no climate change (including

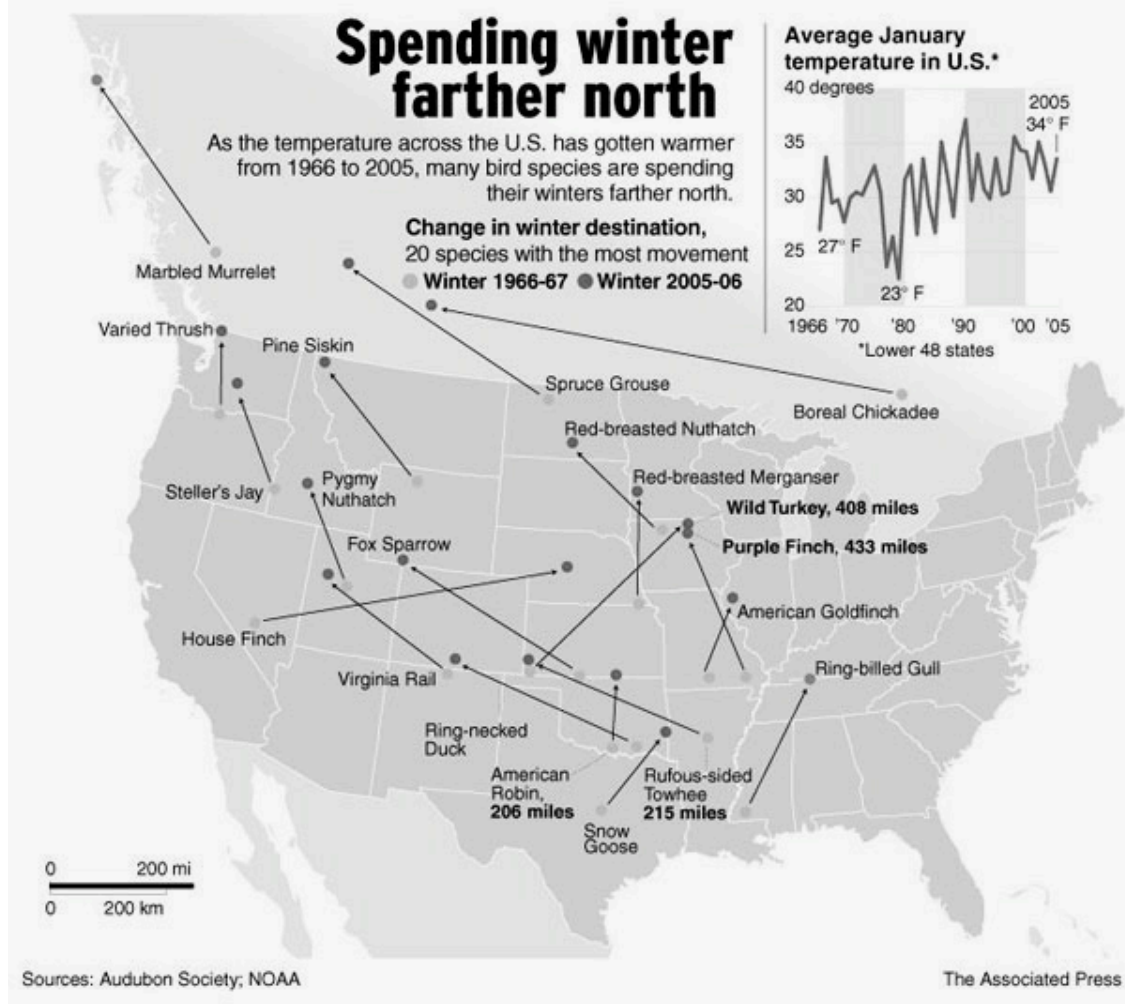
some of the policy makers in Congress), and even if there is, they would say it is part of a natural cycle. There are many others (including myself) who aren't absolutely sure that the climate change is strictly due to increased CO<sub>2</sub> only. A recent study of early warm-up periods 10,000 years ago, or other dates, shows CO<sub>2</sub> only increases long after global warming has occurred. The old basic science equations of does A cause B, or does B cause A, or are the variables C, D, E, F ... combined, and by interacting with each other, cause both A and B to be at work here?

Anyway, to convince or educate people about climate change, you have to be very careful about generalization. The more SCIENTIFIC facts you have (there are many who claim to have facts that are not based on science), the more knowledgeable you become, and the easier it is to explain climate change - to the extent that it currently is explainable. If you want to use science, you always have to be open to modifying your position and look at new data.

I would like to use one example of where there is considerable data accumulated over time to show how climate change has impacted the range of birds. The National Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) can be looked at for trends in

*continued on page 5*





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### **Climate Change: A 21st Century Challenge** by Clem Klaphake

possible changes of various bird species winter ranges. These counts were started 113 years ago, but were not very widespread across the country during the first 50-60 years. Thus, Audubon has used data from the last 40-50 years only.

The CBC data from the past 40 years shows many bird species have moved dramatically northward. The overall warming

of the climate makes the northern latitudes more hospitable to many species found further south. The correlation is quite high between warming degrees and miles of movement northward.

Significant northward movement occurred in 177 of 305 (58%) observed species. More than 60 species moved further than 100 miles north - whereas the average for all 305 species was 35 miles. Here are a few species examples from the Audubon study:

Brant Goose - 200+ miles further north  
Black Duck - 180+ miles further north

Ring-necked Duck - 200+ miles further north

Green-winged Teal - 160 miles further north

Red-breasted Merganser - 300+ miles further north

Black-bellied Plover - 114 miles further north

American Goldfinch - 110 miles further north

*...continued on page 6*



## 2013 Audubon Society of Omaha Birdseed sale pickup

From left to right Jerry Toll, Clem Klaphake, Neal Ratzlaff, Dick Rasmussen, Eric Scholar, and Mace Hack

*...continued from page 3 ...*

## BIRD SEED SALE VOLUNTEERS— THANKS!!

Web Master: Jim McLochlin  
Mailing: Helen Bartee, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Nelli Falzgraff, Essie Grill, Eunice Levisay, Carole & Dick Rasmussen and Kathy Schwery.

Garages : Neal Ratzlaff, and Bob and Kathleen Rose.

Distribution crew (Loading the seed): Jerry Toll, Crew Chief. Crew; Jo Bartikowski, Laurine Blankenau, Dolan Collins, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Jonas Grundman, Mace Hack, Tim Kautzman, Clem Klaphake, Wendell Kuhlman, Eunice Levisay, Maria McIntosh, Jim

McLochlin, Loren & Babs Padelford, John Pollock, Justin Rink, Bob Rose, Al Reyer, Duane Schwery, Eric Scholar, Larry Sekyra, and Don Westling.

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## Climate Change: A 21st Century Challenge

by Clem Klaphake  
*...continued from page 5*

Spruce Grouse - 316 miles further north

Pine Siskin - 290 miles further north

Also see the map for some other species' movement northward. Is climate change causing this northward movement by many bird species? It is nearly impossible to prove direct

causation, but global climate change is the most probable explanation due to the strong statistical correlations.

There are many other examples (almost an endless list) that one could analyze and find similar correlations to the northward movement of birds. For instance, increasing insect problems (northward and in higher elevations), human diseases, water shortages, forest fires, severe storms, coastal flooding, shifts in precipitation patterns, etc.... Each one of these examples requires considerable research, data collection (especially long-term data) and analysis to convince and educate people about how the world around us is being impacted in a multitude of ways by global climate change.

## Addresses to Remember

### President Barack Obama

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington D.C. 20500-0001  
Comments: 202-456-1111

### Senator Michael Johanns

U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 202-224-4224  
Lincoln: 402 476-1400

100 Centennial Mall N Rm 294, Lincoln NE 68508-3803

### Senator Deb Fischer

825 B Hart, Senate Office Building, Washington D.C.  
20510 Washington Phone: 202-224-6551

Lincoln: 440 No. 8th St, Suite 120, Lincoln NE 68508  
Lincoln phone: 402-441-4600

Omaha: 11819 Miracle Hills Dr, Suite 205, Omaha, NE  
68154 Omaha phone: 402-391-3411.

### Representative Lee Terry

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: 202-225-4155; Fax: 202-226-5452

Omaha Address: 11717 Burt St, Omaha 68154  
Omaha phone: 402-397-9944

### Representative Jeff Fortenberry

House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: -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: 402-471-6031

### Mayor Jim Suttle

Omaha/Douglas Civic Center

1819 Farnam St, Omaha NE 68183

Phone: 402-444-5000 Hot Line: 402-444-5555

Lincoln Capitol Switchboard: 402-471-2311

Washington Capitol Switchboard

Senate: 202-224-3121; House: 202-225-3121

## Memorials

The Audubon Society of Omaha greatly appreciates the memorials it receives. When sending a gift please identify the person you wish to memorialize and the name and address of the person to be notified.

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha, P.O. Box

We offer two choices of membership: one includes membership in National Audubon as well as in our local chapter, receiving the *Audubon Magazine* and our newsletter, *The Meadowlark*. A portion of the dues is returned to our local chapter.

The other choice is local membership only: this includes receiving *The Meadowlark* and participation in all of our local activities. Dues all go to our chapter.

### **Membership in the National Audubon Society**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### **Introductory Membership (1st & 2nd Year) \$20 Make check payable to National Audubon Society**

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha  
19612 Ridgeway Road  
Plattsmouth, NE 68048 COZCP030Z

### **Membership in The Audubon Society of Omaha only**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### **Make check for \$20 payable to Audubon Society of Omaha**

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha  
19612 Ridgeway Road  
Plattsmouth, NE 68048 COZCP030Z

## Bequests

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

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

Audubon Society of Omaha Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103 - 0542

Phone: 402-451-3647 - <http://audubon-omaha.org>

Office: 1941 So. 42nd Street, Omaha, NE 68105

Elected Officers:

President	Justin Rink	904-415-3282
1st Vice President	Jackie Scholar	551-5045
2nd Vice President	Laurine Blankenau	451-3647
Past President	Jerry Toll	453-9239
Treasurer	Dennis Kingery	556-9082
Recording Sec'y	Nelli Falzgraf	292-9687
Corres. Sec'y	Ann Boice	315-1884
<u>Elected Directors:</u>	Jamie Vann	733-1891
	Elliott Bedows	292-5017
	Jonas Grundman	216-5413
	Bob Fuchs	553-8242
	Tad Leeper	670-5919
	Eric Scholar	551-5045

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation	Bob Fuchs	553-8242
Education	Clem Klaphake	292-2276
Field Trip	Justin Rink	904-415-8279
Finance	Nelli Falzgraf	292-9687
Fund Raising	Vacant	
Membership	Kathy Schwery	296-4788
Program	Jerry Toll	453-9239
Natural Areas Mgt	Eric Scholar	551-5045
Publication	Jamie Vann	733-1891
	Laurine Blankenau	451-3647
Publicity	Jackie Scholar	551-5045

Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Chairs	Kathleen Rose	292-8912
	Carole Rasmussen	731-3939
Speakers Bureau	Eunice Levisay	393-0545
Historian	Eric Scholar	551-5045
NAS Board Member	Peter Cannon	608-251-1276

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audubon-omaha.org](http://audubon-omaha.org)

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e-mail [djschw@windstream.com](mailto:djschw@windstream.com).

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