

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.

May/June, 2015
Volume 44, Issue 4



ASO is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, serving eastern Nebraska and western Iowa.

Thursday, May 14 – Johnny's Cafe Ross Silcock to Present "From Palau to Kosrac: Western Pacific Birds, Culture and History"

by Clem Klaphake

You are invited to Audubon's annual banquet Thursday, May 14, at Johnny's Cafe, 4702 So. 27th St. Members, families, and friends are welcome. **A reservation form is included in this issue. Deadline for receipt of the reservation is May 7.**

Members are invited to bring their photos to be displayed. These should be matted or framed. A vote will be taken for each guest's favorite.

Our speaker is Ross Silcock, well-known birder extraordinaire in both Iowa and Nebraska.

Being from New Zealand, he always had an interest in the birds, history and cultures of the Pacific region and plans to visit all of its major islands as is practical. His interests are not only in seeing the endemic birds of these islands but also to experience their rich diverse cultures.

Ross began organizing birding trips to New Zealand in 1995 when asked by some of our members. Every other year

since then, he has organized a trip (a total of 10 so far) to his home country, 2013 being his last. He also has led trips to Micronesia and Hawaii with some local birders from Iowa and Nebraska. He now feels it is time to organize birding trips for himself to the Sub-Antarctic Islands.

Ross' interest in birds was piqued when he joined a bird club led by his high school Latin teacher who was president of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. As an undergraduate, he lacked time for birding – rugby, golf and rowing took up his spare time.

He came here for graduate school in North Carolina and joined the Raleigh Bird Club. Since then he has been an active birder in many ways: past president of IOU, Life Member of NOU, and serving on the Re-

cords Committees of both IOU and NOU. He is a member and supporter of the New Zealand Forest and Bird (similar to National Audubon), a member of TNC and Ducks Unlimited, and many other conservation-minded organizations.

In addition to world travels, he has been involved with a variety of local bird research projects, e.g. surveying Cerulean Warblers and Henslow's Sparrows, and point count surveys of Indian Cave State Park for Nebraska Game & Parks. He does two BBS routes each year and is the data compiler for NOU's Nebraska Bird Review. All of this in addition to his full-time job, which I understand is beginning to wind down.

Join us for some good food, socializing and a great informative and entertaining speaker.



Eight Black Noddies near Ulong

Postings from the President: By Laurine Blankenau

In this my last president's page, I have persons to thank and a message to send to our membership. I served with an outstanding board of directors who gave much, accomplished much, and managed it all with cordiality.

Our total membership numbers are strong, and I'm convinced we're solid and prepared for a good future because I know many of you have much to give us and our work for the environment of Nebraska.

- The board had the pleasure of donating to organizations whose worthiness is unquestioned, one being the Nebraska Land Trust directed by Dave Sands. Dave thanked us personally at a board meeting, and gave us details of their work preserving farm and ranch land in our state.
- We pledged funds for the expansion of Allwine Prairie/

Glacier Creek. Professor Tom Bragg, coordinator of fundraising for the project, gave us the welcome news that this pledge put them over the top toward acquiring one of the parcels of land they are seeking to obtain.

- A new project under the aegis of ASO will begin in October of this year - Saw-whet Owl Banding in southern Iowa, to be directed by Jerry Toll. Funding has been obtained from several sources, and ASO will contribute as well.
- To introduce children to our state's little-known swift fox, we presented area elementary schools with Nebraskan Jeff Kurrus' book, "The Tale of Jacob Swift" – Jacob being a young fox with much appeal to children. Elkhorn, Millard, Westside District 66, Bellevue, Ralston, and Papil-

lion/LaVista schools received the books.

A flurry of fundraising – the Birdathon in May, OmahaGives! also in May, and a garage sale in June - is needed to comply with IRS rules for non-profits. **Be assured that your donations** will continue to help endow the projects that conserve our environmental richness.

Beginning in March and lasting through October, an inventory of the wildlife at Audubon Prairie is being undertaken. Birds, plants, insects, small mammals and herpetofauna will be surveyed and the results reported. Volunteers Eric Scholar, Clem Klaphake, and Jerry Toll, plus paid employees are doing the survey. Glenn Pollock, Prairie Manager, oversees it all.

Our annual Prairie Festival will move from hot and steamy August to June 28, when hiking should be more pleasant. The garage sale will be held June 11-13.

It's been an honor to serve Audubon as president for two years with a stellar board, and I leave the presidency in excellent hands. Tad Leeper will assume the position July 1. I welcome our new 2nd Vice President, Tisha Johnson, and Bob Wells, also new, as Director.

And thanks to departing 1st Vice President Dennis Kingery and Director Elliott Bedows, who have given much to our chapter during their present tour of duty and in the past. To all board members, thank you!

I will be around as past president, so this isn't exactly goodbye. I enjoy seeing all of you when we meet. I hope this will be often.

REMINDER: BIRDATHON 2015

On Saturday, May 9, the Sarpy County Spring Bird Count will double as the count for our Birdathon, when birders will take to the trails to count the total number of species seen that day. Members of ASO can help our chapter fulfill its obligations as a non-profit organization by hopping onto the count and making a donation. Your donation will help fund our monetary support of environmental organizations and their work in Nebraska.

You may pledge \$.10, \$.20, \$.30, \$.40 or other, times the number of birds seen or heard on the count day. Or simply decide on a sum to donate and remit that amount to ASO.

You will be notified on line and via post card of the total number of birds counted, after which you can send your check to Audubon Society of Omaha, P. O. Box 3542, Omaha NE 68103-0542. Please provide your email and/or street address on the donation form so we can send an acknowledgment of your tax-deductible donation.

You will find a Birdathon donation form in this issue and on our web site, audubon-omaha.org. For answers to questions, call 402-451-3647.

**We greatly appreciate any donation you choose to make.
Your contribution is tax deductible.**



OMAHA GIVES!

powered by the Omaha Community Foundation

On Wednesday, May 20, from midnight to midnight, the Omaha Community Foundation will sponsor Omaha Gives!, a 24-hour online fundraising event for Omaha-area nonprofits. Anyone can make a minimum credit-card donation of \$10 by going online to omahagives24.org.

Incentives from local businesses encourage even more giving. There are participation prizes, hourly drawings and bonus dollars! Donors can easily find the organization(s) they wish to support and the cause(s) they care about. You can help our cause – the health of our environment – one you care about.

Go on-line to <https://www.omahagives24.org> on May 20, anytime from midnight to midnight. Your donation is fully tax deductible. We extend our heartiest thank you for any amount you choose to give. For more information, contact Betty Fullerton @ 402-493-4362 or Laurine Blankenau @ 402-451-3647.

The Annual Sarpy County Spring Bird Count

The Annual Sarpy County Spring Bird Count will be held on Saturday May 9th. The county is divided into four sections from Fontenelle Forest on the Missouri River in the east to the Platte River in the west

in the Linoma Beach area. In between are two sections including Schramm Park SRA, Swanson Park, and Walnut Creek Lake Recreation Area. Counters will be needed and any help is appreciated. If you are interested in helping out all day or part of the day contact Clem Klaphake at 402-292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net

 **DESOTO SPRING COUNT - SEE PAGE 4** 

WANTED:
Editor for *The Meadowlark*
We are seeking someone to assume the responsibilities of editor for *The Meadowlark*.
Please call 402-451-3647 for particulars.

Wanted: Items for Our Garage Sale

We are seeking donated items for our garage sale, which will be held in prime yard sale season, **Thursday through Saturday, June 11 – 13, at our office in the Center Mall.**

If your home is like most, there are unused items here and there that you won't miss if they are moved out. **Please think of this as a convenient means to give them extended life at our sale.**

Suggested items are home & garden decorative/useful items, tools, books, DVDs, CDs, unwanted, unused gifts, jewelry, glassware & ceramics (plates, vases, etc.) framed and unframed photos and art, small furniture items, optical equipment, and many more you'll find you can do without.

We will not be taking clothing, toys, or badly worn items.

Bring your drop-offs to the Audubon Office, Center Mall (1941 So. 42nd St, Level 1, Room 108) Saturday, May 30 or Saturday, June 6 from 10 to 3:00. Convenient first level covered parking entrance is from Center Street, east-bound, just east of the 42nd St intersection. Help is available for carrying items.

Please call 402-451-3647 or 402-551-5045 if you have questions. Your donations are tax deductible. You will be given a receipt for your records.

We need help to staff the office on drop-off days (see above), to arrange items for the sale days, and on the days of the sale. Please call one of the numbers above to volunteer.

Prairie Festival to Take Place in June

The prairie festival will be held Sunday, June 28, 2015 at Audubon Prairie in Omaha, from 12:00 noon to 4:30 pm. The Prairie is a surviving remnant of the tall grass prairies that once covered much of our area. In late August, some grasses can be six to eight feet tall, giving us a glimpse into the setting the first inhabitants of our country knew.

Prairie Wildflowers will be abundant, along with butterflies and birds. The monarch butterfly migration should be underway. Songbirds and raptors make the prairie their home.

Activities for the whole family will be part of the day. At 1:00 p.m. a talk along with a hike will be presented by both Audubon's prairie manager, Glenn Pollock and a person with specialized knowledge of the prairie's wildflowers. Glenn will explain the extraordinary qualities that allowed prairie plants to survive fire, grazing, drought and floods and how prairies are managed. At 3:00 visitors can join a hike led by experienced birders.

Water, lemonade and cookies will be served. Bring lawn chairs if you wish to relax in the shade of our tent; also, bring insect repellent and sunscreen. Portable toilets will be provided. **Wear comfortable shoes!**

To reach the prairie, take 72nd St to Bennington Road (1/2 block north of McKinley Highway also known as Hwy 36). Turn east on Bennington and go about 1/2 mile to reach the prairie. (Note: When you enter Bennington Road, stay on the gravel portion; do not go on the concrete portion). Park on the road next to the prairie. Volunteers direct parking.

Volunteers are needed to carry off this event. If you can help, call Eric at 551-5045 or Laurine at 451-3647. For questions call Eric or Laurine.

The DeSoto Spring Bird Count set for Saturday, May 2nd

by Jerry Toll – geritol48@cox.net

Volunteer birders who wish to participate in this annual event will meet at 8 am at the Visitor Center. We will divide up into groups and cover the entire refuge if we have enough people. ASO adopted The DeSoto Wildlife Refuge way back before any of us can remember. We have been cooperating with the staff to have Christmas Bird Counts and Spring Bird Counts ever since that dawn of time date. The Christmas Bird Count is for Audubon National but the Spring Count is for the Refuge. They use the information gathered to look at avian usage of the refuge during migration, and that information is incorporated into their Comprehensive Conservation Plan that they revise periodically. Their most

recent Plan came out in 2014, after the Great Missouri River Flood of 2011. The Flood profoundly affected the Refuge and precipitated fundamental changes to the management plan. There is now more shorebird and wading habitat available, through management, even in dry winter/springs that we have been experiencing lately. Each year since the flood, it is interesting to see the habitat change in response, and document the avian response to those changes. The DeSoto Count is timed to be on the early cusp of peak migration time. Most years, over 100 species are counted.

Please join us for the DeSoto Spring Bird Count May 2nd. Dress for the weather and insects, and if you can stay the entire day, please bring your lunch. We will have lunch at the Visitor Center about noon. If you can only come in the afternoon, you may join in.



Clem Klaphake with members of the Bird Identification class he taught this spring. The class is held each spring for 15 persons, beginning in March and ending in May, in the classroom and on field trips.

A way to begin years of enjoyment recognizing the birds by sight and song.

WANTED: FIELD CLUB/ASO MEMBERS

ASO wishes to contact any of our members who are also members of the Field Club of Omaha.

Please call 402-451-3647 for information.

Banquet Reservation

Johnny's Cafe, 4702 So. 27th St (L St Exit off Kennedy Freeway)

Thursday, May 14: Cash Bar 6:00 pm; Buffet dinner at 7:00 pm

Name _____ Phone _____

Address & Zip Code _____

Email address _____

Cost of dinner: \$25 per person. Enclosed is _____ for _____ persons.

Patron ticket(s): \$50 _____. Tax deductible amount is \$25.

Make check payable to Audubon Society of Omaha.
Mail to Helen Bartee, 521 Beverly Dr, Omaha NE 68114

Reservations must be received by May 7.

Birdathon Donation Form

Participate in a bird count without binoculars or hiking: Count Date: Sat, May 9.

I pledge the following amount per species recorded to help the Audubon Society of Omaha carry out its many community-related environmental and educational projects.

\$0.05____ \$0.10____ \$0.20____ \$0.30____ \$0.50____ \$_____ per species

_____OR_____: I pledge the following flat amount to support ASO's efforts: \$_____

You may wish to pledge an additional amount to participate in the count

with the following leader: _____ \$_____

Name _____ Address _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ email _____

You will be notified of the total Count number on line and by post card. You may pay on line (instructions to come later) or send your check to Audubon Society of Omaha, P.O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103-0452. You will be sent a receipt for a tax-deductible donation. Thank you! Questions? Call 402-451-3647.

Herbicide Linked to Cancer

We know it is harmful to wildlife and have long been urged to use it with extreme care. Recently the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) reports the World Health Organization's conclusion that glyphosate, along with

malathion and diazinon, are "probably carcinogenic to humans."

The first, glyphosate, is known to us as Roundup, marketed by Monsanto. The massive amounts of glyphosate used worldwide – 250 million pounds per year in this country - have increased recently, owing partly to the use of

genetically engineered crops, especially corn and soy, upon which it is used heavily.

Malathion, another toxic culprit, has been targeted by the EPA for "likely" harming endangered birds, mammals, fish and insects, while diazinon is "very highly toxic to freshwater fish and invertebrates," as well as endangered birds and mammals. Its use on food crops for humans include its greatest use on almonds and "stone fruits." It is not surprising to know that the manufacturers of these pesticides are opposed to limiting their use, in spite of their danger to wildlife, including endangered species.

The CBD considers glyphosate to share blame for the decline of monarch butterflies. For this reason it is seeking protection for them under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. It is challenging an EPA's recent decision to increase (!) the use of glyphosate. One bit of good news is that the EPA has been required by a settlement through the CBD to analyze the effects of malathion and diazinon on endangered species.

—The above information was reported by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a branch of WHO that held a meeting of experts from 11 countries.

MARCH FIELD TRIP COUNTS 71 SPECIES

by Clem Klaphake

Fourteen persons participated in the field trip to Branched Oak Lake, with a short visit to Saunders County. A total of 71 species were seen (pretty darn good since very few were migrant passerines – no warblers or kinglets, only 5 sparrow species). Participants came from Omaha, Bellevue, Lincoln and Ames. A great day to be birding with like-minded people! The highlights:

Common Loon (FOY for everyone)

Turkey Vulture - " "

Horned and Eared Grebes – FOY for everyone)

Loggerhead and Northern Shrikes - " "

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Thayer's Gull (on shore wrestling with a fish too big to eat whole)

Eastern Phoebe (FOY for everyone)

Fox Sparrows

Waterfowl – 22 species including Loon, 3 geese species and 18 duck species



Common Loon

Phil Swanson



Butterfly

Babs Paddleford

Addresses to Remember

President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500-0001, Comments: 202-456-1111

Senator Deb Fischer, U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510; Phone: 202-224-6551; Fax: 202-228-1325; Lincoln Phone: 402-441-4600; Omaha Phone: 402-391-3411; Omaha Address: 11819 Miracle Drive 68154

Senator Ben Sasse, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; Phone: 202-224-4224; Lincoln Phone: 402-476-1400

Representative Brad Ashford, U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Phone: 202-225-4155

Representative Jeff Fortenberry, House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515, Phone: 202-225-4806; Lincoln Phone: 402-438-1598

Governor Pete Ricketts, Capitol Bldg, Lincoln, NE 68509; Phone: 402-471-2244

Mayor Jean Stothert, 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

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 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 3542, Omaha NE

Memberships

We offer two choices of membership:

1. Includes membership in National Audubon as well as in our local chapter. It includes receiving the *Audubon Magazine* and our newsletter, *The Meadowlark*. A portion of your dues is returned to our local chapter.
2. Is a local membership that includes receiving *The Meadowlark* and participation in all of our local activities. All dues go to our chapter.

Membership in the National Audubon Society and in the Audubon Society of Omaha

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____
Zip Code _____ Phone _____
E-mail _____

Introductory Membership (1st & 2 year) \$20 Make check payable to: National Audubon Society. Mail to: Audubon Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 422248, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6718

Membership in Audubon Society of Omaha only

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____
E-mail _____

Make check for \$20 payable to: Audubon Society of Omaha. Mail to: Audubon Society of Omaha, 19612 Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth, NE 68048



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

Audubon Society of Omaha
P.O. Box 3542
Omaha NE 68103-3542

Non-Profit Organization
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Omaha, Nebraska
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Audubon Society of Omaha, Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103-3542

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

Office: 1941 S. 42nd St., Omaha NE 68105

Elected Officers:

President Laurine Blankenau – 451-3647
1st Vice President Dennis Kingery – 556-9082
2nd Vice President Tad Leeper – 670-5919
Past President Justin Rink – 904-415-3282
Treasurer Betty Fullerton – 493-4362
Recording Sec’y Nelli Falzgraf – 292-9687
Corres. Sec’y Linda Dennis – 733-6548

Elected Directors:

Eric Scholar – 551-5045
Jonas Grundman – 216-5413
Elliott Bedows – 292-5017
Bob Fuchs – 553-8242
Helen Bartee – 657-3845
Gary Peterson – 553-3597

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation Bob Fuchs – 553-8242
Education Clem Klaphake – 292-2276
Field Trip Clem Klaphake – 292-2276
Finance Nelli Falzgraf – 292-9687
Membership Kathy Schwery – 296-4788

Program Jerry Toll – 453-9239

Publication Laurine Blankenau – 451-3647

Publicity Jackie Scholar – 551-5045

Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Chairs
Kathleen Rose – 292-8912
Carol Rasmussen – 731-3939
Speakers Bureau – Eunice Levisay – 393-0545
Historian -- Eric Scholar – 551-5045
NAS Board Member – Michele Crist – 208-863-1918
Pan-Flyway Director – Karim al-Khafaji

Six issues of *The Meadowlark* are published annually:
January - February, March - April, May - June, July -
August, September - October, November - December.

The newsletter may be accessed on our website,
<http://audubon-omaha.org>

Send address changes to: Kathy Schwery, 19612
Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth NE 68048, or
email: djschw@windstream.net.