

May 2004

Volume 33
Issue 5

ASO is a Chapter

of the National Audubon Society

Serving Eastern Nebraska

and Western Iowa

Annual Sarpy County Bird Count Spring Banquet at Johnny's May 13

Spring has sprung, migratory birds are coming through, and it is time to see and hear them in their finest courting splendor—just as they appear in the field guides. Clem Klaphake is organizing the Count on Saturday, May 8, and would place novices with experienced birders. Please contact him at ckavian@cox.net or 292-2276.

Birdathon 2004

The 2003-2004 year is No matter the organization or mission, fundraising is a must. Bechara Embaid wrapping up is planning our spring Birdathon May 8 to 15 to raise money for activities paid with a gala by ASO general funds, such as birding and general programs, the *Meadowlark*, event at other educational efforts and conservation action.

Johnny's Steakhouse on The Prairie Preserve upkeep and restoration; NRD's Heron Haven; and hungry Thursday, May hawks, falcons and owls of the Raptor Team all require funding.

13. We invite all members to attend. Guests are welcome. You will be receiving a flyer with complete information. Call Bechara, 965-9598, if you have questions.

The evening's ceremonies will begin with a social hour and cash bar at 6:00 p.m. followed by the buffet dinner at 7:00.

May Events

Guest speaker will be Neal Ratzlaff, who will present "Birds of Lewis and Clark." Neal is well known

for his
extensive
knowledge
about the
famous
expedition and
its leaders.

Don Helmuth,
Executive
Director of
Audubon
Nebraska, will
inform us of
their plans for
Omaha and
other sites in
the state.

A Service
Award will be
presented.
New and
incumbent
officers and
directors will
be installed.

Items will be
offered for
sale that
include the
beautiful,
recently
published
*Field Guide to
Wildflowers of
Fontenelle
Forest and
Neale Woods*
by Neal
Ratzlaff and
Roland Barth,
plus tee shirts
and caps with
the new ASO
logo.

If you haven't
as yet made
your
reservation,
please
complete the
reservation
form on Page

3 of this issue.
Reservations
must be
received by
May 10.
Please call
Jackie Scholar,
551-5045, if
you have
questions.

We hope to see
many of you at
the banquet.

Summer 1 (Sat) DeSoto Bird Count

Picnic 5 (Wed) Board Meeting

Watch our 8 (Sat) Sarpy County Bird Count

summer issue
of the 8-15 Birdathon

Meadowlark
for an 13 (Thurs) Banquet

announcement
of our annual 15 (Sat) Zoo Safari Migratory Bird Day

summer picnic
(indoors) at 22 (Sat) Earth Day

the ASO 23 (Sun) Earth Day Rain Date
building,

Heron Haven.

A July date is
anticipated.

This is a good
way to connect
with other
ASO members
during the
long break
between
general
meetings and
other
scheduled
events.

Thanks

I want to express my appreciation for all of your contributions to our chapter. Some have helped plan, work or fund raise to make possible our programs and events. A group has helped with preparing, folding and mailing newsletters. Many other tasks have been taken care of, such as staffing the headquarters, caring for gardens and natural area, and participating with family and friends to make functions successful and fun for all. It is your talent, time and interest that have kept ASO viable.

Board Members have worked to revamp the functioning of our chapter. The process of effecting change is an evolving effort that relies on the will and resolve of individuals. This isn't easy, as volunteers rotate each year and are paid with handshakes. I'm indebted to the leadership of Elliott Bedows, Mace Hack, Eric Scholar, Jenny Henriksen and Laurine Blankenau, and I commend the decisiveness and wisdom of our members and Audubon allies.

Discussions have identified priorities such as increasing birding networks, using the wetland for research rather than continued development, expanding education and environmental awareness. The general Audubon mission of protecting birds, other wildlife and habitats has been redefined. We are working to bolster successful activities and add those that foster our collective goals. This will involve reining in costly projects that benefit few and strengthening strategies of teamwork and cooperation.

Thanks to all for supporting ASO and making the past year a rewarding challenge.

Roland Barth and Neal Ratzlaff

Nature organizations and those who make things happen aren't all about work. Roland Barth and Neal Ratzlaff, birders extraordinaire and Past

members. The *Field Guide* will also be available at the Thursday, May 13, ASO Spring Banquet at Johnny's Steakhouse, where Neal will be our featured speaker. See item, page 1.

Sometime in early May, Canada Anemone flowers start to open near the observation deck of Fontenelle's Great Marsh, buds of large beardtongue, aka wild foxglove, can be seen at Jonas Prairie in Neale Woods. Timber phlox and Virginia waterleaf can be found blooming in moist woodlands of both nature centers.

Thank you to Roland and Neal for sharpening our perceptions of the natural world and reminding us why we joined nature organizations.

Fair Weather Fun

Zoo Safari International Migratory Bird Day -

Help Needed

The Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo is organizing an International Migratory Bird Day Saturday, May 15, 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Zoo Safari Visitor Center (just southeast of I 80 Exit 428).

ASO and other environmental organizations have been invited to participate. The Omaha Raptor Team has been asked to bring their birds. This celebration is free, and information will be provided for adults and children.

If you could help staff the ASO booth, call Bechara Embaid, 965-9598. If you have questions, call Julie Anderson at the OHD Zoo Education Office, 738-6903.

Helpers Needed to Fold Newsletters

Once a month a group meets at the Audubon Office at Heron Haven to help fold our newsletter. This takes about an hour and a half.

Presidents of ASO, are authors of a comprehensive *Field Guide to Wildflowers* of Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods. They spent hundreds of days photographing and researching wildflowers. The resulting *Guide* is informative and gorgeous.

Volunteers are phoned each month as to their availability. Please call Laurine at 451-3647 if you can be of assistance. The work is easy and the company is pleasant!

Please stop by the Fontenelle Nature Association Gift Shop for this new book and welcome the growing season with bright beauties at the Forest and Neale Woods. While there, pick up the FNA *Leaflet* for a schedule of guided talks and walks, many led by ASO

Omaha Student Wins Junior Duck Stamp Prize

An item in the Sunday, March 28, *Omaha World-Herald*, announced that Laura Knibbe, a senior at Millard West High, is winner of the grand prize in the Nebraska Junior Federal Duck Stamp Contest. Her work will be entered in the national contest.

Garden Walk in July

Jackie Scholar announces the second annual Garden Walk to be held in July. The date will be selected and announced later.

Jackie planned and organized our first Garden Walk last summer, making it a success. We look forward to be treated to artfully designed and flowering back yards again this year.

Keep us in mind and we hope you will participate!

Breeding Bird Survey

Help is needed for work that is a birder's delight. Annually the U.S. Geological Survey sponsors monitoring of breeding birds to track their population and distribution.

A structured protocol is involved, with a birder and a recorder team driving a specific 25-mile route in Nebraska and counting all the birds seen and heard at 1/2 mile intervals.

Laura's drawing of a Green-winged Teal, done in colored pencil with fine detail in the plumage, was one of 600 entries submitted across the state.

ASO is proud to add that Laura was a first-category winner in our Student Art Contest held in 2003. Her subjects for that entry were baby Mallards, an outstanding work drawing admiration from judges and viewers at the Westroads.

Laura's art teacher is Debi Plog, whose students in the past have submitted work of fine quality for our contest.

Congratulations to Laura Knibbe and Debi Plog for this success. As some viewers have commented, "We will hear more about this young artist in the future."

**Earth
Day
Booth**

This is an opportunity to become familiar with birds of a niche different from that of our local species. A route is to be monitored any day in June.

If you can help, please contact Loren & Babs Padelford, 292-5556, for more information and available routes.

Needs Staffing

Pauline Dickey will be in charge of ASO's Earth Day booth at Memorial Park Saturday, May 22 (rain date May 23). Volunteers will greet the public and provide information. Sale items will be offered. For details about the day's activities, see page 6.

The booth will be staffed from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. or later. Call Pauline at 932-8205 if you are willing to help.

Banquet Reservation

Johnny's Steakhouse on L Street

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.

By Ione Werthman

Conservation/Legislative Action

On last Saturday evening when I went to check the building at Heron Haven, I found an eight-inch hole in our library ceiling, thanks to the hard wind. A huge branch had crashed onto our roof, punctured one of the air vents and sent insulation and gunk all over the floor. All I could do was pray it wouldn't rain over the weekend.

While repairs were being made, I read my backlog of 25 environmental newsletters and decided to tell you in this column about the goings on of some environmental friends around the country.

Mississippi River. From Dan McGuinness, NAS Director of their Upper Mississippi River campaign, comes word that they are challenging the Corps of Engineers to adopt an integrated plan for the river requiring ecosystem restoration and navigation system improvements to be linked in one management plan. They ask that at least \$2.00 be spent in ecosystem restoration for every \$1 spent on the navigation system.

We could say "Welcome to the club." Once again environmental concerns last week were shunned when the Supreme Court refused to intervene in the Missouri River dispute with the Corps

create a task force which "shall" propose modifications because young and family farmers are being hampered, not helped, by the 20-year provision of constitutional ban on corporate farming. Fortunately, the Legislature didn't have time to enact the Bill.

Mead Superfund & Us

Last Monday, with the tree limb dangling from the ceiling, I hosted a citizens group from Saunders, Cass and Douglas Counties to discuss their concerns about MUD's plan for a new wellfield in the Platte Valley aquifer (under the Platte River) to provide new water for Omaha.

In the early Environmental Impact Statement days of this project, ASO and other environmental groups recommended that MUD expand their plant on the Missouri River instead of straddling the Platte in west Douglas and eastern Saunders Counties. Unfortunately, our recommendations fell on deaf ears. Since that time, it was discovered that the contaminated groundwater plume from the Mead Superfund site, which was moving down the Todd Valley aquifer, has now entered the Platte Valley aquifer.

From the Missouri Valley Sierran of

about changing the river flow to preserve fishing and recreation. Lawyers from the Dakotas and Montana told the justices that the value of recreation to the economy should not be downplayed. Nebraska and Missouri, on the other hand, urged the court not to take the case because of their interest in water for farming, power, and other industries (barge traffic).

Snowmobiles. From our friends at Environmental Defense comes a report that their lawsuit pressing the EPA to enact more rigorous emission limits for snowmobiles has focused public attention on this under-regulated source of pollution. A single snowmobile can pollute as much as 100 cars.

Filling a Need. Did you know Nebraska has a Land Trust? Founded in 2001 as a nonprofit organization, the Nebraska Land Trust offers conservation options to landowners to protect their land for generations to come for wildlife habitat or historic sites. Dave Sands, former Director of Audubon Nebraska and Nebraska Audubon Council's lobbyist, is the Director.

Initiative 300. Clearing the record on Initiative 300 comes from the Center for Rural Affairs Newsletter. It seems Governor Johanns' views changed overnight. The *Lincoln Star Journal* of December 31, 2003, reported the Governor announced his support of Initiative 300 and opposition to efforts to amend the constitution as it passed 20 years ago. Two weeks later he asked the legislature to

April 2004, comes this report by Dorothy Lanphier, who has followed this project and the plume progress:

"The superfund site contains a contaminated groundwater plume that covers at least 10 square miles. Contaminants include TCE (Trichloroethylene), used as a solvent for cleaning metal parts, and RDX (Royal Demolition Explosive), also known as cyclonite or hexogen. RDX is used in explosives. Both are health hazards. Drinking small amounts of TCE for long periods can cause liver and kidney damage, impaired immune system function and impaired fetal development. RDX can cause seizures in humans and animals when large amounts are inhaled or eaten. Drinking contaminated water is also an exposure route.

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has the responsibility of "cleaning up" the site and has been attempting to contain the pollution by installing a groundwater remediation system of 11 extraction wells to pump out contaminated water into a treatment plant, a plan which is scheduled to take at least 100 years. (Some say 300 years.) However, in August of 2001, one of the extraction wells. . .unexpectedly began pumping TCE at a rate more than three times higher than previously recorded, and TCE levels rose to 7,000 parts per billion before the well was shut down and further testing ordered. Approximately 1,500

Continued on page 5

longtime member of the Bird Club and Audubon Society of Omaha, died on March 24, 2004.

Birding was one of the great joys of her life. In recent years when her hearing did not allow her to identify her beloved birds by song, she insisted it was no great problem because she still had them (the songs) in her head.

Miriam taught me to identify waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds at such places as the Iowa Settling Ponds, Lake Manawa, Forney Lake, and Chalco Hills. I will always be grateful for our outings that initiated me into a wonderful hobby.

Conservation, Cont from Page 4

feet north of that well, TCE was found at 47,000 parts per billion. The EPA has set the drinking water standard for TCE at .005 parts per million."

Environmentalists feel the known extent of the contamination plume is questionable, has not been contained, and is moving in unpredictable paths. It is now estimated to be just two miles from the proposed MUD wellfields. The citizens feel the MUD project must be reevaluated because with pumping permits of 50 million gallons of water a day, the drawdown could possibly put the contaminated plume into the MUD

By Jenny Henricksen

This is a most unusual combination, but if you add a cerval cat and a fennec fox, you end up with a fun evening for families.

The Omaha Raptor Team and Wild Encounters recently participated in family night at Holling Heights Elementary School.

As you can see from the photo, taming an alligator is serious business!

If you would like more information on how you can have feathered, scaled and furry teachers visit your organization or school, call 895-5487.

Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Sunday Hours

Spring Creek Prairie will be open Sundays this season for visitors to walk the trails and enjoy the beautiful prairie. Hear chorus frogs, meadowlarks, and other sounds of spring as you and your families enjoy the outdoors together. Children can discover deer tracks, beaver trails, and turkey feathers.

The 626-acre tallgrass prairie preserve owned by NAS will be open Sundays 1 - 8 p.m. from April 25 through June 27. This is in addition to the regular hours of Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. throughout the year. Staff and volunteers will be available to greet visitors and answer questions.

Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center is located twenty minutes southwest of Lincoln (follow SW 98th Street south out of Denton for three miles). Call 797-2301 for more information.

Turner and Ali

You may order new ASO

wellfield and spread into those of Ashland and Lincoln. This needs to be resolved scientifically as we citizens of Omaha will be the ones paying for the wells and for any superfund contamination. MUD gets its money from us.

Join us for our next Conservation meeting May 3, 7:30 PM at the office, Heron Haven.

tee shirts to your and birding in NE is specifications. Call available for \$10 to Pauline at 932-8205 or members, \$13 to come to the banquet May nonmembers and sold in 13 and look at the catalog. bookstores for \$13 plus Short sleeve shirts are tax. Its information is \$10; long sleeve \$14. We basic and will change also have a few shirts on little over time. hand for the same price.

ASO caps with the logo good price by NE Game embroidered on front are & Parks. A portion of the available for \$14. proceeds will go towards nongame wildlife efforts

The Jan-Feb issue of by Game & Parks and is Nebraskaland Magazine one of the few ways we dedicated entirely to birds can provide financial support to them.

We were given a very good price by NE Game & Parks. A portion of the proceeds will go towards nongame wildlife efforts by Game & Parks and is one of the few ways we can provide financial support to them.

6

Celebrate Earth Day Omaha 2004

Saturday May 22 - Noon to 9:00 P.M. Some of the special events will include -

Rain Date: Sunday, May 23, same time, same place.

- Wild Encounters! A fun educational show with wild and exotic animals

Where: Omaha's Memorial Park (Dodge St, across from UNO) www.earthdayomaha.com

- Over 2,000 free trees given away by the Papio- Missouri Natural Resources District

Earth Day Omaha 2004 will be a free celebration open to the public with entertainment for the whole family - something for everyone!

- Lewis and Clark Living History Interpreters (see what the Lewis & Clark campsite looked like)

Bring the family for lunch or dinner as vendors will be selling great food and drinks.

- Native American dancers and drumming
- Lewis & Clark Reenactors and storytellers

The focus of the celebration is fun and education. It is hosted by a coalition of many organizations. Our goal is to promote environmental education and awareness in our community.

- Fun science exhibits and activities
- UNO's CAPOW Van and its science show of pops, bangs, and flashes

We do this as a public service for our fellow Nebraskans, and the event is a 100% volunteer effort for everyone.

Our theme this year is "Share the Lewis and Clark Journey," as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Bring the family to learn about it. We'll have many Lewis & Clark entertainers and fun family activities.

Continuous live entertainment and great free music on two stages!

- Pony rides, a rock climbing wall, and petting zoo
- Inflatables for jumping fun and many fun rides for kids
- Display and demo of the Toyota Prius and Honda Accord gas-electric cars
- Kite flying show by Midwest Winds Kite Flying Club
- Omaha Raptor Team live birds of prey
- Presentation of the Fred Thomas Memorial Essay Contest awards to schoolchildren
- The event is free and open to the public.

Environmentally Sound Products

Several excellent products reducing stress on the environment are receiving attention, some you may not have discovered. Supporting the makers of these products is a good plan for the environmentally sound shopper.

Substitutes for plastic sandwich, freezer, and specialty bags are available in cellulose. They are derived from plant cells and can be recycled with other paper for pickup at the curb. Being biodegradable, they can be composted. One supplier may be accessed at help@greenhome.com, or 1-415-282-6400.

The tree-free fiber industry is growing. Kenaf, switchgrass, and industrial hemp produce high quality paper, clothing, and building materials. Straw from harvested crops for tree-free paper and other products has a future in the United States and elsewhere. In countries such as China where forest removal has made it necessary, its use is prevalent.

Citra-Solv, a natural citrus cleaner and degreaser for laundry use or multiple household cleaning, is available in health food stores and through the internet. In concentrated form, it has enough power for heavy degreasing industrial uses while being friendly to the environment.

Rather than using harmful chemicals, choose among safe methods of protecting the lawn or garden from harmful insects. Information on the web is helpful.

With West Nile on the rampage, a good repellent is vital for protection. Some contain all natural ingredients, are effective and available in some stores or through catalog companies such as Gaiam, www.gaiam.com

And, of course, the backyard bird bath needs a frequent power cleaning/splashing to avoid making it a mosquito nursery.

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) 226-5452

Omaha phone: (402) 397-
9944

Representative Douglas
Bereuter

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

Phone: (202) 225-4806; fax

Audubon Society

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The *Audubon Magazine**(see below,
chapter-only membership) and your
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Street_____

City_____State_____

Zip Code_____Phone:_____

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11809 Old Maple Road

Omaha NE 68164

PO 3

7XCH

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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

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.

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

**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

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

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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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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-
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