

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.

January/February 2018
Volume 47, Issue 1



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

January Meeting Saline Wetlands: Beyond the Beetle

By Alex Wiles

On January 11th we will be joined by wildlife photographer Ethan Freese as he discusses his current project - Saline Wetlands: Beyond the Beetle. This project is focused on showing the diverse assemblage of resident and migratory species that rely on saline wetlands beyond the Salt Creek tiger beetle. While the

tiger beetles are an important indicator species for this unique ecosystem, there are hundreds of other species that call these wetlands home. The meeting will be held at 7pm in the UNO Weitz Community Engagement Center. Meetings are open to the general public, so feel free to bring some friends.

The Galapagos Islands Presentation on February 8th

By Alex Wiles

Our February program will be led by Suzanne Gucciardo. She will recount her time spent in the Galapagos Islands searching for birds and other wildlife. Please

join us at 7p.m. on February 8th at the UNO Weitz Community Engagement Center on the UNO campus.

MARCH SPEAKER

By Clem Klaphake

You will want to keep Saturday March 17 open for a special speaker sponsored by ASO and Fontenelle Forest. The speaker is Rick Wright, a native of southeast Nebraska. Rick has lived and worked in many different places in the United States as a professor at the University of Illinois, Princeton University and Fordham University. Rick's talk will be celebrating John James Audubon's voyage up the Missouri River 175 years ago. What were Audubon's accomplishments on this expedition as he traveled past modern-day Bellevue? Rick will be speaking at 7:00p.m. at Fontenelle Forest on March 17th. More information will follow in the March-April Meadowlark, the ASO web site and ASO Facebook. It will also be posted in Fontenelle Forest's Leaflet, web page and Facebook.

Great Backyard Bird Count is February 16-19



Dark Eyed Junco Mike Benkis

The Great Backyard Bird Count for 2018 is scheduled for Friday, February 16th through Monday, February 19th. This is a four day event that engages birders of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning birders to experts. For further information visit the official website at www.BirdCount.org



Red-bellied Woodpecker Mike Benkis

Field Notes from the President: By Matt Miller

Hello fellow Audubon Society of Omaha Members,

As another year flies by, I want to thank all of our members, volunteers, and partners for making this year special. Our ASO youth art show, adult and youth birding field trips, and the ASO sponsored Christmas bird count shows me the commitment to the community that Audubon Society of Omaha has. The reason I joined this organization was for its core values which I interpreted as community, habitat, and birds. All of our events and gatherings

reflect these core values. As ASO marches into the New Year, look for your organization to keep pushing forward in our activism when it comes to community engagement and habitat restoration. ASO continues to look for ways to engage the public in birding and education on birding habitat. The Fontenelle Forest/Audubon Society of Omaha savanna restoration project on Hilltop Trail at Neale Woods will be wrapping up soon with a seeding happening sometime in January

or February, so keep an eye out for an announcement on social media searching for volunteers to help seed.

Again, thank you to all of our members and volunteers, and let's make 2018 a great year for our community and habitat for our beloved feathery friends.

*Yours in conservation,
Matt Miller*

**Audubon Society of Omaha/
Fontenelle Forest Hilltop
Restoration Project (5/2017)**



Omaha Youth Birding Group

By Tisha Johnson

I recently met one of our members on our October field trip. She said she'd been reading the newsletter and often told herself she ought to go on one of our field trips. When she finally came, she got a two for one. Birds and a new place to bird, Wehrspann Lake. She's lived in Omaha for decades but never knew anything about this birding spot. When field trip participants discover different natural places in Omaha while birding, hopefully it creates a new option for them that ultimately increases their outdoor time.

Upcoming Field Trip Dates:

*January 7th, Sunday afternoon
3:15pm*

*February 4th, Saturday afternoon
3:15pm*

Closer to the date, check website for location or simply call Tisha at 402-885-0990

Now back to Wehrspann Lake where my husband and I went birding last week. We observed a pair of reddish-orange canvas-

backs in the afternoon sun. We have observed the list of birds below at Wehrspann Lake. It truly is a crown jewel birding location!

Here's the kind of details you can garner when birding with others. Following is a page from my field guide.

"So we parked at the boat dock. North of that parking lot, pine trees grow along the edge of the lake. We walked almost to the edge, but turned to the West and walked in between the pines. We went about 70 yards, then tiptoed towards the edge and set up our scope. We have seen the following bird species within the last three days, during two visits. Both times were in the afternoon, one was between 1:30 and 2:30 and the other 3:15 and 4:30."

Pelicans

Barrow's Goldeneye

Common Goldeneye

Common Merganser

Buffleheads

Ring-necked Ducks

Gadwall

Redhead

Canvasback

Coot

Mallards

Widgeons

What was most notable is that we saw 12 different species and there were, by our estimation, just 100 ducks. During the first visit we were excited to see Common Goldeneyes. On our second visit the Common Goldeneyes were gone, but the Barrows Goldeneyes were there. It was not confirmed by an expert birder that they were Barrows, but with bird book in hand, we specifically looked for the shape of the 'eyespot', and on the first visit it was round. We noticed it was lower and more crescent shaped on the second visit and the female was clearly identified to be a Barrows Goldeneye. Will follow up with Bob and Clem regarding identification.

CALLING ALL STUDENT ARTISTS (and art lovers) 2018 Audubon Student Art Contest and Show

By Virginia Stauffer



Anastasia Manhart

The dates are set for the annual Audubon Society of Omaha Student Art Show. Starting January 2, rules, entry forms and more can be found at audubon-omaha.org under Special Events. Entries are due Saturday, February 24, at the Audubon of Omaha office.

The Art Show will take place on Saturday, April 14, at Bellevue University where artwork of all students entering the contest (grades K through 12) will be on display from 12:00 noon until 3:30 pm that day. The awards ceremony will start at 2:00 pm.

Please check with any student artists you know to see if they are interested in entering this year.

Even if their class or school is not participating, we welcome their entries and encourage our members to support their creative efforts as they relate to wild birds.

The show features student artwork of birds found in the Midwest or of endangered birds throughout the world. The artwork is judged for Excellence or Merit in these categories:

Realism,
Graphic Design,
Cartooning, and
NEW FOR 2018, Recycled.

Want to get involved?
This event draws a large

number of entries and we need volunteers to help. If you would like to help, it would be greatly appreciated; plus, it's fun to see the artwork of our local talented students. Here's a list of tasks and dates we could use your help:



Tanner Erickson



Madelyn Buck

Collection and organizing of artwork:

Friday, Feb. 23
3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Saturday, Feb. 24
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Hanging of artwork at Bellevue University John Muller Administration Building:

Friday, April 13
9:30 am till noon

Help with hosting the show OR take down and take away:

Saturday, April 14
12:00 pm till 2:00 pm and/or
3:00 pm till 4:00 pm

Please contact Virginia Stauffer at vsstauffer1@yahoo.com or 214-676-6289 if you would like to be a part of this popular event.

Bird Identification Class 2018

By Clem Klaphake

8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. \$25.00 for all 3 classes must be paid before the start of the first class.

Part 1

MARCH 10th

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center

Part 2

APRIL 14th

Wetland Learning Center

Part 3

MAY 5th

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center

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 presidents of the Audubon Society of Omaha, this class includes local field trips/walks 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 to register. For ages 12 and up. The class is limited to 15 people.

GO PAPERLESS

Help us reach our goal of 250 people receiving the newsletter via email. We are almost at 100!

Each person who receives a newsletter via email saves 15 sheets of paper per year and, best of all, gets the full color effect of The Meadowlark.

Signing up is easy. Simply email audubonomaha@gmail.com with the subject: I want to go paperless. Want program reminders? Follow us on Facebook!

Bird Seed Sale Volunteers – Thanks!!

Our 37th annual bird seed sale is over and it was truly a group effort from start to finish. Neal Ratzlaff has been there for all these sales. Thanks to his continuing support, Audubon members and friends can count on an excellent supply of quality bird seed products. Additional 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 like to recognize the workers whose volunteer efforts made this sale a success.

Head-of-it-all: Neal Ratzlaff



John & Betty Fullerton, Jerry Toll, and Sam Coury

Chief assistants: Carole and Dick Rasmussen, Jerry Toll, John and Betty Fullerton, Kathleen Crawford-Rose

Computer Backup & Labels:

Duane Schwery

Web Master: Stacey Coury

Mailing: Dot Bowman, Mark Cave, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Suzanne De Ree, Nelli and Randy Falzgraff, Betty and John Fullerton, Sue Gentes, Carole and Dick Rasmussen

Garages: Neal and Deb Ratzlaff, John and Betty Fullerton, and Bob and Kathleen Rose

Distribution crew (Unloading and Loading the seed):

Jerry Toll, Crew Chief

Crew: Jo Bartikowski, Elliott Bedows, Mark Cave, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Betty & John Fullerton, Mace Hack, Tim Kautzman, Clem Klaphake, Andy Miller, Sarah and Matt Miller, Loren & Babs Padelford, John Pollock, Deb and Neal Ratzlaff, Bob Rose, Al Reyer, Duane Schwery, Melissa Sitze, and Don Westling.

RUNNING LOW ON BIRD SEED?

You can stock up at Audubon Omaha's WINTER EMAIL BIRD SEED SALE

The pickup date is Saturday, February 17, 2018. The pickup site will be Neal Ratzlaff's garage at 536 Brentwood Rd.

We will email an order form in early January to all previous customers who have given us their email address.

If we don't have your email address already, you can send us a request at fullertonj@cox.net. Or, you can download the order form at <http://audubon-omaha.org/> after January 15.



Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival – March 22-25, Kearney, NE

by Kevin Poague

Hundreds of wildlife enthusiasts from around the country will enjoy field trips, a wide range of educational speakers, and lots more during this exciting weekend celebrating the world-famous Sandhill Crane migration. Main speakers this year are Dr. Richard Beilfuss, president and CEO of the International Crane Foundation; photographer and author Noppadol Paothong from the Missouri Department of Conservation; and Tod Winston, National Audubon Society's Plants for Birds Program Associate.



Photo by Don Brockmeier

Field trips include sunrise and sunset visits to Platte River viewing blinds at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, overnight prairie grouse trips to Mullen and McCook, and a new excursion this year to Red Cloud, Neb., to visit Willa Cather historical sites.

The event is organized by Audubon Nebraska and the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. See the festival website for more information:

<http://ne.audubon.org/birds/crane-festival>.

Addresses to Remember

President Donald Trump, 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 Don Bacon, U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Washington Capital Switchboard: 202-225-3121; 13906 Gold Circle, Suite 101 Omaha, NE 68144, 402-938-0300

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

DONATE DIRECTLY FROM IRA, TAX-FREE

IRA owners age 70-1/2 or older are able to make a direct transfer of a distribution from their IRA trustee to a qualified charity, up to 100,000 annually. This amount is not taxable and may be excluded from the IRA owner's taxable income. If this is done, no additional tax deduction is available for these funds. Contact 402-505-9494 for more information. (Be sure to discuss with your professional tax preparer)

Memberships

For membership in the National Audubon Society (which automatically includes membership in the Audubon Society of Omaha), go to omahaaudubon.org and select "Get Involved." The drop down menu will allow you to choose "Become a member" or "Renew." The membership fee is \$20. You will receive the Audubon magazine and our local newsletter, the Meadowlark.

If you do not wish to join the National Audubon Society, you may opt to join our local chapter (ASO) only. This can be done online by following the steps given above and selecting Join/Renew ASO. Local memberships can also be obtained by filling out the form below and sending it, along with a check for \$20 made out to the Audubon Society of Omaha, to the following address:

Audubon Society of Omaha
19612 Ridgeway Road
Plattsmouth, NE 68048

With membership in the Audubon Society of Omaha, you will receive our local newsletter, *The Meadowlark*.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____



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

Find ASO on social media:



@AudubonOmaha

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

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

Phone: 402-445-4138 – omahaaudubon.org

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

Elected Officers:

President Matt Miller – 402-681-4625

1st Vice President Bob Wells – 402-393-4683

2nd Vice President Tisha Johnson – 402-885-0990

Corresponding and Recording Secretary

Kathleen Crawford-Rose – 402-292-8912

Elected Directors:

Alex Wiles – 559-349-7359

Galyn Langar – 402-595-8543

Jackie Scholar – 402-551-5045

Sarah Miller – 402-980-9678

Shannon Engberg – 402-598-2127

Virginia Stauffer – 402-933-6063

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation Bob Fuchs – 402-553-8242

Education Clem Klaphake – 402-292-2276

Field Trip Clem Klaphake – 402-292-2276

Finance Nelli Falzgraf – 402-292-9687

Membership Kathy Schwery – 402-296-4788

Natural Areas Management Glenn Pollock – 402-571-6230

Program – Alex Wiles 559-349-7359

Publication Helen Bartee – 402-657-3845

Publicity Jackie Scholar – 402-551-5045

Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Chairs

Kathleen Crawford-Rose – 402-292-8912

Carol Rasmussen – 402-731-3939

Art Contest Chair

Virginia Stauffer – 214-676-6289

Historian – Eric Scholar – 402-551-5045

Interim Exec. Dir. Audubon NE – Bill Taddicken – 308-465-5282

ASO Administrator – Stacey Coury – 402-445-4138

ASO Accountant – Betty Fullerton – 402-493-4362

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,
omahaaudubon.org

Send address changes to: Kathy Schwery, 19612

Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth NE 68048, or

email: djschw@windstream.net.