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<P align=3Dcenter>of the National Audubon Society=20
<P align=3Dcenter>Serving Eastern Nebraska
and Western Iowa</I> =
</P>
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<P>Volume 40 Issue 2</I> </P>

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<P>_For some time we have heard
of gender changes

taki=
ng=20

place in frogs and other amphibians, leading to questions about the =
source=20
of the problem and other effects on animals, including humans.=20

<P>On Thursday, February 10, we will hear from two persons at the=20
University of Nebraska at Omaha Aquatic Toxicology Laboratory about =
their=20

work on water quality.=20
<P>Focal points of the research:=20
<P>=A8 agricultural runoff, particularly runoff from rowcrop agricul=
tural=20

fields and from beef cattle feedlot operations, and the interaction=
=20

between contaminants and sediments=20
<P>=A8 the relationship between toxins, genes, and reproduction=20
<P>=A8 the relation between land use and water quality, and between =
water=20

quality and human health outcomes.=20
<P>In the research, caged fish serve as bioenvironmental organisms t=
o=20

monitor the water environment.=20
<P>Speaking at the general meeting is Dr. Alan Kolok, Director of th=
e Lab=20

of Aquatic Toxicology and Professor of Biology at UNO as well as Pro=
fessor=20

in UNMC's Department of Environmental, Agricultural & Occupation=
al=20

Health.=20
<P>Dr. Kolok holds a Ph.D in Environmental, Population and </P>
<TD>
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<P>Organismic Biology from the University of Colorado at Boulder, pl=
us a=20

Master's Degree in Fisheries and Oceanic Sciences from the Universit=
y of=20

Washington, Seattle.=20
<P>Also speaking is Gwendolyn Ryskamp, Research Assistant at the Lab=
, who=20

is currently pursuing a master's degree in civil engineering at UNO.=
She=20

holds a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering from the Univ=
ersity=20

of Florida.=20
<P>On Page 3 of this issue, an item describes a research project to =
be=20

conducted by the UNO Lab to test the Elkhorn River waters for the=20
pesticide atrazine. We are <I>asked </I></P>
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<P><I>t</I>o assist by performing simple tests. The
date of t=
he=20

test is Saturday, April 23. Complete information is included in the=
=20
article. Ms. Ryskamp will answer questions about the process of cond=
ucting=20

the date of t=

the tests.=20
<P>Please join us for the program at 7:00 p.m., February 10, at the=

=20
Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances Street (1 block south of=

45th=20
& Center).=20

<P>A brief business meeting will follow the program. Cookies and a s=

ocial=20
hour will conclude the evening. Visitors are welcome. </P>

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<H3>Field Trip February 19 to Local Cemeteries </H3>

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<P>By Justin Rink </P>

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<P>Join Justin Rink on Saturday, February 19, in a search for winter=

birds=20
at two local cemeteries.=20

<P>We will start at Forest Lawn Cemetery, and if time permits, we wi=

ll=20
travel to the Resurrection Cemetery on Center Street.=20

<P>Possible species on our list include Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pi=

ne=20
Siskin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creepers, and more.=20

<P>We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Forest Lawn Cemete=

ry=20
(accessible from Mormon Bridge Road on the west side of the cemetery=

</P>

<TD>

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<P>The weather could be quite cold, so be sure to dress with that in=

mind.=20
Warm footwear, espe </P>

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<P>cially, is essential.=20

<P>You need not be a member of Audubon to join us on our field trips=

.=20

<P>All are welcome, regardless of the leavel of birding skills. </P>

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<P>By Jer Toll </P>
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<P>I am thinking deer. A few weeks ago I was walking here alone when=
,=20
quickly, I was surrounded by the rush of a herd of 75 or more deer=20
passing. Soon I heard a voice, and a man, his daughter and their hun=
ting=20
dog emerged trailing the deer. The dog methodically working back and=
=20
forth. That many deer could easily be overbrowsing the young sapling=
s.=20
<P>
<P>This part of the park is not manicured and intended for organized=
use=20
as so many of our city parks are. It is neglected by the city and re=
ceives=20
very little attention. And thus it is a place for nature's rhythms t=
o=20
regain a foothold and a place for a person to contemplate the=20
surroundings, let the mind be expansive and live in the moment.=20
<P>
<P>Hattie returns, having been gone only a few minutes. Her eyes are=
=20
bright, her ears perked, she greatly enjoys chasing deer! However, s=
```

he is=20
never gone long. She does not like being far from Carol or me. We ha=
ve=20
never had a better dog. We wander along, my mind following suit, Hat=
tie=20
following obediently behind until we stumble upon more deer.=20
<P>
<P>Finally, worn from slogging through snow but mentally rejuvenated=
, we=20
emerge from the woods. Time to return to the warmth of home and the=
=20
responsibilities of modern life. Do I write this article now or answ=
er the=20
draw of my body to rest? The article can wait a while longer. </P>
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<P>A January Walk in the Woods=20
<P>
<P>It is sunny but brisk with little wind, a perfect day to walk wit=
h=20
Hattie at N. P. Dodge Park and look again for the Pileated Woodpecke=
rs. We=20
start down the trail to the river but soon veer into the woods, tram=
ping=20
through the snow to where the pileated are most often seen. I am ale=
rt,=20
listening and watching the cottonwood canopy for them. =85=85=20
<P>
<P>They are being elusive today, Hattie is occupied with the many de=
er she=20
comes to see, my mind wanders in the moment. I ponder the woods. Why=
are=20
there so many woodpeckers here? Though the pileated are not apparent=
,=20
there is the constant drumming of woodpeckers and nuthatches all abo=
ut. It=20
is a mature riparian forest dominated by cottonwoods. There are nume=
rous=20
cavities, dead limbs, snags and logs littering the forest. Ideal. Th=
ere=20
are decomposers here, insects in profusion in warm weather, in hiber=
nation=20
in winter, under bark, or to be drilled from the limb and trunk. And=
that=20
is what I hear.=20
<P>
<P>But there is something else going on, new to me. There is also vi=
ning=20
poison ivy in profusion, climbing many of the trees, appearing more =
like=20
strangler fig on some. I discover Flickers and Downy Woodpeckers eat=
ing=20
the berries of the poison ivy, sometimes five or six on a single vin=
e.=20
They are oblivious to Hattie and me far below and unconcerned with m=
y=20
curiosity on the forest floor.=20
<P>
<P>My mind follows the thread from woodpeckers to the ecology of the=
=20
woods. The cottonwoods are old, shedding limbs and eventually themse=
lves=20
on the understory mulberry, ash, and elm that have become bent and b=
roken=20
below as a result. The ground too is littered with the remains of tr=

ees,=20
forcing me to look down at my footfalls. I look for forest regenerat=
ion.=20
There is no sign of young saplings. There are enough breaks in the c=
anopy=20
for light to reach the seed bed. This area has flooded from the Miss=
ouri=20
River twice or three times in the past ten years, a prerequisite for=
=20
cottonwood seed germination. </P>
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<P>Bird Songs Bible: The Complete, Illustrated Reference for Nort=
h=20
American Birds
<P>This package of illustrations and audio player of bird songs is a=
=20
superb and beautiful aid to mastering bird songs and sightings.=20
<P>Produced with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the publisher descr=
ibes=20
this reference work as one of "lavish illustrations, scientifically=
=20
accurate range maps, and detailed information on distribution, habit=
at,=20
behavior and vocalizations. The digital player brings to life...the =
birds'=20
songs and calls with the touch of a button." The hardcover 536-page =
book=20
is 14 x 14.9" (10.5 lbs). \$125.00. </P>
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<P>
<P>"What's In Our Water" is submitted by the University of
Nebraska-Omaha's Aquatic Toxicology Laboratory, describing a test we

are
urged to be part of. To participate, you need to contact the Lab to
sign

up, receive brief instructions and a test kit. Their article explain
s the
project and the simple process.

<P>"This being a largely agricultural state, Nebraska farmers apply

thousands of tons of the herbicide atrazine each year to their field
s.

Although this chemical can increase crop yields, large amounts often
escape through rainwater runoff and enter our waterways.

<P>"Once in the water, atrazine is taken up by aquatic life and can
have a

negative effect on reproductive organs. This phenomenon is commonly
known
as endocrine disruption.

<P>"The University of Nebraska - Omaha's Aquatic Toxicology Laborato
ry has

been researching endocrine disruption in the Elkhorn River for the p
ast

several years, and now we'd like your help to perform a large- scale
inventory of atrazine in the basin.

<P>"We are sponsoring a "What's in Your Water </P>

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<P>shed?" day on April 23, 2011, during which citizen scientists lik
e you

will test for atrazine at sites across the Elkhorn River Basin. You
don't

need any experience with water testing or laboratory equipment to he
lp us
out, just a willing attitude!

<P>"The test is very simple and can be completed in 10 minutes at an
y

river or stream-side site. Detailed instructions for performing the
test

can be found in a video demonstration on our website,
www.unomaha.edu/envirotox.

<P>"We will provide test kits to all participants and help you to fi
nd a

test site if you are unsure of where to go. Upon reading your test
results, all we ask is that you enter your data along with the locat
ion of

your site into our website or phone it in to our researchers. From t
he

data we will generate a map of the atrazine found throughout the riv

tributaries, and we will better be able to predict its movement in our local waterways.

To join us in this exciting event, please contact Gwen Ryskamp at (402) 554-3302 or email gryskamp@unomaha.edu.

Introductory Bird Identification Class

Saturdays: March 12, April 9, and May 7
8:00 a.m. - Noon - Fontenelle Forest Nature Center
\$20.00 fee includes all three sessions
For ages 12 and older
Registration required: Contact Clem Klaphake at 292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net
The class is limited to 15 participants.
With over 50 million 'birders' in the U.S., bird watching is the fastest growing outdoor activity today. This three-part class, led by Audubon Society of Omaha members Clem Klaphake and Justin Rink, includes local field trips and instruction on how to identify birds. No prior knowledge of bird identification is needed.

Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own.

Charles Dickens

2011 Audubon Greater Omaha Student Art Contest

The 2011 Audubon Greater Omaha Student Art contest is underway. Students from grades K -12 are asked to research one of the birds of Nebraska or one of an endangered species of birds and then draw the bird using an artistic technique such as watercolor, oil paint, chalk, print, etc.

The students are also asked to research what the particular bird eats, where it is likely to be found and at what time of the year it can be found in the particular area.

Instructions for preparation of the entries and other information can be found on the Audubon website www.audubon-omaha.org. Deadline for submission of entries is Feb. 26.

All entries will be hung for display at the Bellevue


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    <h3 align=3Dcenter><b>Bird Count Totals, Records, and Notables </b></h3>
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<P>
<P>The DeSoto/Boyer Chute Christmas Bird Count was held Sunday, January 20
nd, under sunny but cold conditions. The species count is 65 with Pileated Woodpecker, Prairie Falcon, and Golden Eagle seen during Count Week. This number is tied for second place in the 14-year history of the count, the high being 69 and the low being 51 species. There were nine species of waterfowl thanks mostly to open water at DeSoto NWR. Eight species of diurnal raptors including a Goshawk were seen at Hitchcock. Both Northern and Loggerhead Shrike were seen. Chickadees numbered 265, the third highest record. Loggerhead Shrike was new to the count. Pileated Woodpecker is new to the count as well but was not seen count day. Notable misses were Eurasian Collared Dove, white geese, Carolina Wren, Lapland Longspur and Red-winged Blackbird. We had 21 observers in 10 field parties.

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<P>The Omaha CBC was held Saturday, December 18th, and a lovely day it was. The sun shone, the wind did NOT blow, the streets were dry and the temps were very livable. You can't ask for more, but we received it anyway.

<P>The highest species ever for our count was 78, plus 3 count-week birds for a total 26,562 individuals. Maybe it was the highest number of counters that managed to pull this off: 42. My thanks to tried, true and new.

<P>We gained two new species: Blue-winged Teal and Clay-colored Sparrow.

We had high counts of Canada Geese 9,606; Cackling Geese 817, Red-tailed Hawk 146; Eastern Bluebird 175; American Robin 1,533. Just enough open water for 16 species of water-related birds, including 4 Pelicans, nine species of raptors and seven species of sparrows.

<P><I>Betty Grenon, Compiler</I> </P>
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<P><U>Species Account</U>=20
<P>White-fronted Goose-1=20
<P>Canada Goose-5,168=20
<P>Cackling Goose-4=20
<P>Mallard-4,770=20
<P>Northern Pintail-10=20
<P>Lesser Scaup-12=20
<P>Common Goldeneye--=20
<P>161=20
<P>Common Merganser-48=20
<P>Ruddy Duck-3=20

<P>Ring-necked Pheasant=20
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<P>Wild Turkey-163=20
<P>Bald Eagle-40=20
<P>Northern Harrier-7=20
<P>Sharp-shinned Hawk-7=20
<P>Coopers Hawk-1=20
<P>Goshawk-1=20
<P>Red-tailed Hawk-95=20
<P>Rough-legged Hawk-5=20
<P>Golden Eagle-CW=20
<P>American Kestrel-4=20
<P>Prairie Falcon-CW=20
<P>Hawk species-1=20
<P>Rock Pigeon-208=20
<P>Mourning Dove-36=20
<P>Screech Owl-2=20
<P>Great-horned Owl-8=20
<P>Barred Owl-7 </P>
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<TD>
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<P>Northern Saw-whet Owl-1=20
<P>Belted Kingfisher-2=20
<P>Red-headed Wood=20
<P>pecker-4=20
<P>Red-bellied Woodpecker=20
<P>-78=20
<P>Downy Woodpecker-91=20
<P>Hairy Woodpecker-19=20
<P>Northern Flicker-135=20
<P>Northern Shrike-2=20
<P>Loggerhead Shrike-1=20
<P>Blue Jay-116=20
<P>American Crow-198=20
<P>Horned Lark-21=20
<P>Black-capped Chickadee=20
<P>265=20
<P>Tufted Titmouse-17=20
<P>Red-breasted Nuthatch-5 </P>

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<P>The Ames, Nebraska, Count was held on December 14. Thirteen=

n=20

people helped count, and we found 60 species plus 4 count-week birds=

. The=20

best ever for this relatively new count.=20

<P>Notable species were Cackling Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, P= rairie=20

Falcon, Wilson's Snipe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Common Grackle,=20

Yellow-headed Blackbird.=20

<P>Notable numbers were Canada Goose, 4,157; Cackling Goose 106; Mal= lard=20

10,828; Northern Harrier 8; Rough-legged Hawk 11.=20

<P><I>Don and Janis Paseka</I>, <I>Compilers </I>

<P></P>

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  <p>Spotted Towhee-1=20
  <p>Eastern Towhee-1, American Tree Sparrow-571=20
  <p>Fox Sparrow-1, Song Sparrow-13=20
  <p>White-throated Sparrow-4=20
  <p>White-crowned Sparrow-1=20
  <p>Harris Sparrow-44, Dark-eyed Junco-986=20
  <p>&lt;B>Snow Bunting-18&lt;/B>,=20
  <p>Northern Cardinal-186=20
  <p>Meadowlark Species-22,=20
  <p>Common Grackle-1=20
  <p>Purple Finch-10, House Finch-13=20
  <p>American Goldfinch-105, House Sparrow-353=20
  <p>Total Species-65; Total Individuals-16,478 &lt;I>Jer Toll, compiler=
=20
  </I>&lt;/P>
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  <p>White-breasted Nuthatch-94=20
  <p>Brown Creeper-11=20
  <p>Winter Wren-1=20
  <p>Golden-crowned Kinglet-3=20
  <p>Eastern Bluebird-63=20
  <p>American Robin-671=20
  <p>European Starling-1,428=20
  <p>Cedar Waxwing-80=20
  <p>Yellow-rumped Warbler-2 &lt;/P>
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<h3 align=3Dcenter>Great Backyard Bird Count=20
<p align=3Dcenter>February 18 - 21. </h3>
<p>

<p>The 2011 GBBC is a chance to join a nationwide citizen science pr=

oject.=20
The Count is pretty easy, but people may still have a question or tw=

o=20
about what exactly they need to do.=20
<p>To make it even easier this year, a set of instructions can be pr=

inted=20
and read ahead of time. These explain exactly how to make a checklis=

t and=20
give step-by-step information about how to enter the count on-line. =

The=20
instructions can be downloaded at citizenscience@audubon.org or=20

=20
gbbc@cornell.edu. Also, the FAQ section has more in-depth answers to=

.=20
questions about how the GBBC works and what is done with the results=

Briefly, participants are to count birds at any location for at =

least=20
15 minutes or more. They are to record only the highest number of ea=

ch=20
species seen together at any one time (to avoid counting the same bi=

rds=20
more than once.) The results are to be recorded on line.=20
<p>Data will be submitted on a separate list for each day of countin=

g. The=20
same location is all right, but each new location requires a new che=

cklist=20
(more than one on a given day is all right). </p>
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<h3 align=3Dcenter>Rivers & Wildlife Celebration March 17-21=

/b>=20
</h3>
<td height=3D33>
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<p>

<p>To enjoy the sights and sounds of giant flocks of Sandhill Cranes=

in=20

the skies, in the fields, roosting in the river, or taking off with =

wild=20

cries at sunrise, come to the Rivers & Wildlife Celebration Marc=

h=20

17-20 in Kearney. Enjoy field trips to the cranes, to Prairie Chicke=

ns,=20

other waterfowl or passerines, plus fine indoor sessions with speake=

rs and=20

other events.=20

<p>Audubon Nebraska and the Nebraska Bird Partnership have signed on=

=20

speakers of note, including National Audubon's new president and CEO=

,=20

David Yarnold, as well as activities for the entire family.=20

<p>Early registration is recommended; lodging can be located through=

=20

www.nebraska.audubon.org or 402-797-2301. For crane viewing and migr=

ation:=20

308/468-5282 or rowsanctuary.org. </p></p>

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<p>

<p>Ornithol. Soc. & Wilson Ornithol. Soc.

<p>The above meetings will be held in Kearney March 9 - 13. at the Y=

ounes=20

Conference Center in Kearney. The online address is=20

snr.unl.edu/kearney2011. </p>

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<p>The Water Bird Society=20

<p>The above organization will meet in Grand Island March 13=971=

6 at the=20

Holiday Inn Midtown jointly with the North Am. Crane Working Group.T=

o=20

register contact <i>waterbirds.org/annual_meeting</i> and North Amer=

ican=20

Crane Working Group: <i>nacwg.org. </i></p>

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<h3>January 22 Armchair Field Trip </h3>

<p>By Clem Klaphake=20

<p>Audubon visited three locations to observe feeders: one at Fonten=

elle=20

Forest, the other two in backyards. We also stopped on the way back =

at a=20
sandpit. Birds seen: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker,=20
Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker=20
<P>(1 in Cass County was a hybrid-salmon color), Hairy Woodpecker, H=
ermit=20
Thrush, Carolina Wren (4 total), Pine Siskin (1), Dark-eyed Juncos,=
=20
White-throated Sparrow, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Creeper, White-breast=
ed=20
Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadee, Mourning Doves, Northern Cardinal,=
=20
Robin, Blue Jay, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, European Starlin=
g,=20
Wild Turkey, Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, Canada Geese, Red-=
tailed=20
Hawk, Rough-legged=20
<P>Hawk (2), Bald Eagle.=20
<P>Best Birds: Black Duck, Rough-legged Hawk (2 flew right over us),=
=20
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Hermit Thrush. </P>
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<H3 align=3Dcenter>Great Backyard Bird Count
February 18 - 21=
. =20
</H3>

The 2011 GBBC is a chance to join a nationwide
citi=
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science project. The Count is pretty easy, but people may still have=
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question or two about what exactly they need to do.
To make it e=
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easier this year, a set of instructions can be printed and read ahea=
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time. These explain exactly how to make a checklist and give step-by=
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information about how to enter the count on-line. The instructions c=
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downloaded at citizenscience@audubon.org or gbbc@cornell.edu. Also, =
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FAQ section has more in-depth answers to questions about how the GBB=
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works and what is done with the results.
Briefly, participants a=
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count birds at any location for at least 15 minutes or more. They ar=
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record only the highest number of each species seen together at any =
one=20
time (to avoid counting the same birds more than once.) The results =
are to=20
be recorded on line.
Data will be submitted on a separate list f=
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each day of counting. The same location is all right, but each new=20
location requires a new checklist (more than one on a given day is a=
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right). =20
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February 18 - 21=
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</H3>

The 2011 GBBC is a chance to join a nationwide
citi=
zen=20
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a=20
question or two about what exactly they need to do.
To make it e=
ven=20

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Data will be submitted on a separate list for each day of counting. The same location is all right, but each new location requires a new checklist (more than one on a given day is all right).

Great Backyard Bird Count February 18 - 21.
The 2011 GBBC is a chance to join a nationwide citizen science project.

The Count is pretty easy, but people may still have a question or two about what exactly they need to do. <P>To make it even easier this year, a set of instructions can be printed and read ahead of time. These explain exactly how to make a checklist and give step-by-step information about how to enter the count on-line. The instructions can be downloaded at citizenscience@audubon.org or gbbc@cornell.edu. Also, the FAQ section has more in-depth answers to questions about how the GBBC works and what is done with the results. <P>Briefly, participants are to count birds at any location for at least 15 minutes or more. They are to record only the highest number of each species seen together at any one time (to avoid counting the same birds more than once.) The results are to be recorded on line. <P>Data will be submitted on a separate list for each day of counting. The same location is all right, but each new location requires a new checklist (more than one on a given day is all right). </P>

Student Art Contest


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<p>University Gordon Lozier Center in Bellevue on Saturday, April 2.
=20
Awards will be distributed at 2:00pm on April 2. Entries must be bro=
ught=20
to the Audubon Office at the Center Mall-lower level, 42<sup></sup>nd</sup>/SUP=
<sup></sup>=20
&amp; Center Friday, February 25, 4:00-6:00 pm or Saturday, February=
26,=20
10:00am -3:00 pm.=20
<p>Volunteers are needed to receive the artwork at the Audubon offic=
e,=20
hang the entries on April 1, or to greet the public and help with th=
e=20
awards program on Sat. February 26.=20
<p>Please contact Jackie Scholar at 551-5045 or <u>jbscholar@cox.net</u>=
</u>=20
for more information or to volunteer. </p>
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<H3>Spotlight on Nature=97The Great Horned Owl </H3>
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<P>By Eric Scholar </P>
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<P>_While most Midwesterners are concerned with=20
<P>keeping warm and how to drive on all the snow, several of the are=
a's=20
owl species, including the Great Horned Owl, are concerned with rais=
ing=20
their families. When winter arrives, some animals hibernate, some mi=
grate=20
to warmer areas, and some simply live through it. By remaining in th=
e area=20
and getting an early start on nesting, owls can supply their young w=
ith an=20
abundance of food and increase the young owls' chances of survival.=
=20
<P>Owls are raptors with characteristic large talons and a large bea=
k that=20
make them formidable hunters. Raptors also have very sensitive eyesi=
ght=20
and hearing. Owls are mostly active at night, in comparison to other=
=20
raptors. They also have the characteristics of silent flight due to =
the=20
ragged edges of the flight feathers. In addition, owls can move thei=
r=20
heads in almost any direction, although they can't move their eyes i=
n the=20
sockets. The hearing of owls is acute, with the ears placed in diffe=
rent=20
positions on each side of the head, allowing them the ability to pin=
point=20
prey and strike by sound alone.=20
<P>Nebraska is home to 12 species of owls, some of which are common,=
and=20
some of which are only occasional visitors. Seven species of owls ar=
e=20
known to breed in Nebraska, including the Great Horned, Barred, Barn=
,=20
Burrowing, Eastern Screech, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls. The Sno=
wy and=20
Northern Saw-whet Owls occur here rarely in the winter. The Boreal O=
wl,=20
the Northern Hawk-Owl, and the Great Grey Owl are here only on rare=
=20
occasions.=20
<P>The Great Horned Owl is the largest of our native owls and the fi=
rst=20
owl to begin nesting. It is also the most widespread of our owls,=20
occurring throughout the state. It is most abundant in the eastern t=
hird=20
of the state.=20
<P>Great Horned Owls have wingspans of nearly 4.5 feet and weigh abo=
ut 2=20
to 2.5 pounds. The call of the Great Horned Owl is a series of low h=
oots,=20
usually one long followed by three short and two more long notes. Th=
e=20
male's calls are distinctly deeper in tone than the female's. The ma=
le's=20
deep, soft call is heard often during December and January. This cal=

deep, soft call is heard often during December and January. This call serves to attract a mate and to warn away other males. By keeping other owls away, the male can set up a territory for himself and his mate which provides the pair hunting grounds. </P>
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<P>Both male and female Great Horned Owls have similar plumage. The female is larger than the male, but this is often difficult to tell unless they are lined up next to each other. The male voice is lower and does more of the hooting.
<P>The maximum recorded life span of these owls is about 17 years. The Great Horned Owl is found in practically all habitats of North America. Males begin occupying breeding territories in November. Their territories may overlap with hawks but not other owls. These territories seem to break up around August when the young become independent.
<P>The Great Horned Owl preys on large mammals and other birds. This includes rabbits, squirrels, skunks, and pheasants. These owls will also catch and eat unattended pets as well (cats, small dogs, pet rabbits, guinea pigs, etc).
<P>It hunts by watching from high perches, mostly at night using extremely good hearing and eyesight adapted to low light conditions. It will catch prey and if the prey freezes, it will defrost the food by incubating it.
Great Horned Owls will use existing nests of hawks and eagles or use natural locations such as broken stubs of large trees, hollow rotted trees, ledges of cliffs, or small caves.
Courtship is believed to occur most often in the early evening. The male may bring prey in a mate-feeding behavior. Once paired the 2 owls remain closely associated, often roosting together during the day. The first egg is laid as early as February, with temperatures below freezing. The clutch is usually 1 to 4 eggs.
<P>Remember, if you wander out for a hike in late winter, keep your eyes and ears open for this owl.
<P><I>The author wishes to thank Clem Klaphake for providing several helpful suggestions. </I>
<P>Photo by Phil Swanson </P>
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in National Audubon as well as in our local chapter. It includes rec=

eiving=20
the &Igt;Audubon &/Igt;Magazine and our newsletter, &Igt;The Meadowlark. &Igt;=
/Igt;A=20
portion of your dues is returned to our local chapter.=20
&Pgt;The second option is local membership that includes receiving &Igt;=
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Meadowlark &/Igt;and participation in all of our local activities. Due=
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this membership are all applied to our chapter. &/Pgt;
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&P>The White House,1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW=20
&P>Washington D.C. 20500-0001=20
&P>Comments: 202 456-1111=20
&P>&U>Senator Ben Nelson&/U>=20
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<P>Introductory Membership (1st & 2nd Year \$20)=20
<P>Make check payable to National Audubon Society Mail to Audubon=20
Society of Omaha=20
<P>19612 Ridgeway Road=20
<P>Plattsmouth NE 68048 COZCP030Z </P>
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<P>
Phone_____ E-mail_____

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Center volunteer at 402-731-9869. </P>
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