

October 2006

## Project Puffin

By Nancy Leonard

The last three decades have seen several species of birds brought back from either the brink of extinction or endangered status: the California Condor, the Whooping Crane, and the Bald Eagle, to name a few. While not as dramatic, successful attempts have also been made to bring a species home or to return species to areas where they once lived and bred.

In 1973, the Audubon Society began a project to bring Atlantic Puffins back to islands off the coast of Maine. Puffins had at one time lived and bred on at least six islands but suffered from intense hunting in the mid-1800s. By the early 1970s, only one pair remained on a single island. Between 1973 and 1986, 954 young puffins were transplanted from Newfoundland to Easter Egg Rock. Of those, 914 successfully fledged, and by 1977 some were starting to return. In 1982 four pairs nested on the island, and their numbers had grown to 71 pairs by 2006.

### Bird Seed Orders Due Soon

By Kathleen Crawford-Rose

The deadline for bird seed orders is October 11. Sale dates are October 28 and 29. Order forms have been mailed to all members and former customers. If you would like extra order forms to share with friends and neighbors, please call Carole and Dick Rasmussen at 731-3939 or Kathleen Crawford-Rose at 292-8912.

This year our supplier has warned us that prices are going to skyrocket in late fall or early winter because growing conditions have been poor in the upper Midwest.

Be sure to order extra seed at our low

Bob Lastovica, Supervisor of Birds at Henry Doorly Zoo, spent two weeks on Easter Egg Rock Island as a Project Puffin volunteer. His days began early with a bird count and included periods of observation, capture and weighing of the birds and ended with recording data into the database. Bob is going to share his adventure with us at the October meeting. In addition, he will talk a bit about how the things he learned help him to provide the best environment for the birds at the zoo.

Please join us for a puffin adventure on October 12, 2006. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances Street (one block south of Center St). As usual, we will have a short business meeting and a social hour after the program. See you there!

### October Field Trip to Spring Creek Prairie

By Elliott Bedows

Our October field trip will be held at Spring Creek Prairie on Saturday, the 21st, when we will gather at 8:00 a.m. Elliott Bedows will be our leader.

We will meet in Spring Creek's parking lot at that time and will be joined by members of Wachiska Audubon. A picnic lunch is planned with members of Wachiska, so bring a sack lunch and something to drink.

This is good sparrow territory and sparrows are migrating. Sharp-tailed and LeConte's Sparrows are possible. If last year's luck is repeated, we may see Sprague's Pipit and even a Goshawk. Greater Prairie Chickens may be present.

A new Education Center has recently

prices. Stanley, our seed buyer, highly recommends it.

More hands are needed for loading the bags of seed for customers on October 28 & 29. Call Jerry Toll, 453-9239, coordinator of volunteers, to be assigned a task.

opened on the site, property of Audubon Nebraska, southwest of Lincoln. To reach the site, take S.W. 98th Street south from Denton. Go three miles; the Center is on your left.

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### Current Currents

#### And just when you thought it was still safe

Environmental enthusiasts were utterly shocked this past week when the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that it would endorse the use of DDT to combat mosquitoes suspected of harboring and spreading malaria. In a story published September 15, 2006, Wall Street Journal columnist Betsy McKay wrote, "The World Health Organization, in a sign that widely used methods of fighting malaria have failed to bring the catastrophic disease under control, plans to announce today that it will encourage the use of DDT, even though the pesticide is banned or tightly restricted in much of the world." Needless to say, the decision emotionally polarized the planet. Other news agencies soon echoed the news. And the Bush administration pledged 1.2 billion dollars in support of this effort.

In essence, a line is being drawn between WHO officials who back the use of DDT to combat malaria and those aware of DDT's previous record for ecologic destruction. I had the great pleasure of

#### By Elliott Bedows

indoor DDT spraying is alleged to be much safer than traditional application methods, will the external environment be safer? Likely not - and here's why.

The use of DDT will certainly lower the number of malaria-bearing mosquitoes from malaria endemic areas and save human lives—in the short (3-5 year) term. But will the use of indoor DDT spraying guarantee that the pesticide will remain contained? No! The buildings of the third world are crudely constructed (at best), and after each hard rain, these leaky buildings will need to be re-sprayed. The washed-away toxic DDT could remain in the environment, including ground water, for 20-40 years. This is an environment that contains hundreds of percent more people than it did in the mid-20th century, meaning that more people will be exposed to the long-term effect of DDT than did our previous generations.

Another of the dirty little secrets of the DDT story is that its use was largely curtailed when it was discovered that many mosquito strains were attaining

talking to Betsy McKay the day after her article appeared. It was apparent that she was fully aware of the political volatility of this issue. I'm certain that the knee-jerk response by Audubon members would be to cry "heresy." Though I was invited to submit a negative reply to the Wall Street Journal editor <WSJ.com>, after days of research on the issue, I declined that invitation because this truly is a polarizing issue. However, this article as submitted will be forwarded to Betsy McKay at her request.

WHO argues that this time, DDT spraying for mosquito control will only be done inside homes rather than via the aerial spraying that took place during much of the later 20th century, wreaking havoc on vertebrate species from Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles to humans. These species' cancer rates appeared to rise and reproductive rates fall in DDT sprayed areas.

The spraying of DDT does indeed lead to a sharp reduction in malaria cases in the few countries where it has been used, and malaria experts say it is one of the cheapest and most effective forms of prevention. But it must be sprayed in more than 70% of homes in targeted areas and nearby regions to halt mosquitoes from reintroducing the disease. And therein lies `the rub'. Although

resistance to the chemical, thus reducing its effectiveness. This means that with each attempt to purge the mosquitoes that transmit the disease, the application will be less effective because it will select for DDT resistant strains of mosquitoes. Thus the WHO plan to control malaria by DDT spraying, while well intentioned, is utterly doomed to fail. This is a shame because safer alternatives to DDT are available, albeit at a currently greater cost.

Is reintroducing DDT application a quick and politically correct move to make? Perhaps. But a wise long-term plan it is not.

If you type <DDT.WHO.malaria> in a Google search, you will upload about two million (no joke - try it) articles on this discussion all the way from Rachel Carson's classic treatise "Silent Spring" documenting the deleterious environmental impacts of DDT to WHO's rationale for introducing the use of the chemical to save many, many thousands of human lives in Africa alone. One of very many web sites offering a bipartisan view is [www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid+284231&area=/insight/insight\\_international/](http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid+284231&area=/insight/insight_international/) I spent over a week researching this issue and is it not an easy read. Now for a story with a happy ending. A female Downy Woodpecker flew into our garage last P.M. My

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## **A Wildlife Art Exhibit**

By Loren Padelford

An exhibit that will interest those who appreciate both art and wildlife will be on display through October 29, 2006, at Morrill Hall (Cooper Gallery), University of Nebraska - Lincoln Campus.

Wildlife illustrations by C. G. Pritchard are shown,

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## **Hitchcock Hawkwatch Commences 14th Season**

By Jerry Toll

A few changes have occurred since the hawkwatch began in 1992. Babs and Loren Padelford started it with a small grant. We were all pretty green then to

created during his respected career as staff artist for the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission from 1948 to

1974.

The majority of C.G. (Bud) Pritchard's work in the exhibit consists of his excellent bird paintings and drawings. As a staff artist for Nebraska Game & Parks, he worked mainly in watercolors, but many of his sketches were done in pencil and pen and ink.

He was a master of his craft and was largely self-taught, having developed an interest in bird painting as a child while growing up in Adams County, Nebraska, near Kenesaw. His very large body of work also includes works depicting fish, reptiles, mammals and flowers. We found the quality and variety of Pritchard's work very impressive and well worth driving to Lincoln for. We wanted to give ASO members an opportunity to view it.

The exhibit also includes original artwork, illustrations

from NEBRASKAland and Outdoor Nebraska magazines, Game & Parks publications including brochures, technical publications, maps, and books, as well as interesting archival ephemera.

Museum hours are Monday through Saturday, 9:30 - 4:30; Sunday 1:30 - 4:30. \$5 per person. Free parking in front of Morrill Hall.

## **Current Currents, Cont. from page 1**

wife had left the door open, expecting a UPS package. Normally sparrows, wrens, bats, etc, will fly low enough to shoo out of the garage. The Downy flew high and was unable to see her way out and into freedom. After we nearly depleted her energy trying to get her out (at dusk, where she likely would have been owl prey), I set up some suet where she preferred to land and left her there until the next morning.

Golly, that girl ate a lot over night, which is good. When the Humane Society showed up the next morning to net her, she was full of energy. The officer and I finally netted Ms. Downy and escorted her to freedom. As of 5:00 p.m. that afternoon, she was seen tapping (foraging) on the shake shingles on our house.

hawkwatching. Babs and Loren were at Hitchcock, and I was across the valley at Neale Woods on days we thought hawks would be flying in numbers.

That first year we saw only 1,006 raptors and watched 131 hours. Last year by contrast we logged over 16,000 raptors and vultures and had 7-day per week coverage from September 1 to December 20. Last fall the Pottawattomie County Conservation Board built a 40-foot tower that enables us to scan for hawks 360 degrees.

Since September 1, when we resumed the watch, the tower has been a real boon. A significant number of hawks pass to the east, which previously were mostly undetected. For example, on September 20, a kettle of 91 Broad-wings lifted off from the valley to the east of the tower, and a majority of the Broad-wing flight this year has been tracking down the eastside. However, Turkey Vultures numbers will be lower this year. We are finding that they often circle the watch, going down one side and returning on the other. This was previously suspected but not clearly known. Our numbers will now more accurately reflect their migration.

At the time of this writing, September 23, the Broad-wing migration is in full swing. By October 1, the Broad-wings will be over and the Swainson's movement will be peaking. The early migrant species, Peregrine, Merlin, Osprey and Mississippi Kite will be done except for, perhaps, a few stragglers. The Red-tailed Hawk migration is strong all through October. Sharp-shinned Hawks and Northern Harriers will continue with the Cooper's Hawks tapering off. The eagles fly in November.

Hitchcock Nature Center is located five miles north of Crescent, Iowa. If you don't want to climb the tower, there is still the deck that overlooks the Missouri River

**Continued on page 4**

## Saving Birds from Window Strikes

If you've tried decals or wind chimes to no avail but hate to close the blinds and block your view, it might be a good idea to look into the use of the Bird Screen to reduce or eliminate fatalities via your windows.

The Bird Screen is said to be easy for a bird's eye to pick up but much harder for humans. If you have previous experience with this product, this version is said to be "new and improved."

It is described as "replaceable screening, black framing, three widths (24", 30" and 36"), user-defined length, suction cup or screw hook mounting."

The product may be ordered from The Bird Screen Company, [www.birdscreen.com](http://www.birdscreen.com) or [birdscreen@birdscreen.com](mailto:birdscreen@birdscreen.com), 2469 Hammertown Rd, Narvon, PA 17555. Phone 717-445-9609.

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## 2006 Festival of the Cranes

The 19th annual Festival of the Cranes will run from November 14 to 19, 2006, at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

Over 100 events include great birding opportunities, workshops on photography, drawing, paper cutting and cacti; tours covering geology on Sevileta NWR and historic sites on the Camino Real, plus arts and crafts tents, wolf and raptor displays. A special event teaches

## Reducing Energy Use in the Home

With the heating season almost upon us and you suspect your home is not everywhere energy-efficient, you will welcome the Union of Concerned Scientists' advice for concerned homeowners who'd like to reduce energy costs in the home.

Unnecessary energy use harms more than the budget; it harms the environment. We are told by the Concerned Scientists that fossil fuel-generated electricity used by one house can result in more carbon dioxide released into the air than two average cars.

To remedy problems, an energy audit is recommended, either by you or a professional. Some sources of energy loss can be checked.

**Insulation** may be inadequate in ceilings, floors, attics, crawlspaces, and around pipes and ducts in uninsulated spaces (e.g. basements).

**Heating and cooling** systems use more energy than any others in the home. Older furnaces, boilers, and air conditioners are often inefficient, and leaky or uninsulated ducts exacerbate the problem.

**Water heaters** with a holding tank are often uninsulated, allowing heat to escape.

**Air leaks** may be found at windows, door frames, baseboards, electrical outlets, fireplaces, and foundations.

photography from a model airplane.

Evening features include a dinner theater, Friends of Bosque del Apache banquet, and keynote speakers renowned author, artist and lecturer Julie Zickefoose on My Hummingbird Summer, and Joan Garland on Establishing a Whooping Crane Migration to Florida.

For information go to [www.friendsofthebosque.org/crane](http://www.friendsofthebosque.org/crane) or call 505-835-2077.

The Refuge is south of Socorro, N.M. Take I-25 to Exit 139, go east 1/2 mile to NM Hwy #1, then south 8 miles.

**Lighting methods** often waste energy through lighting empty rooms or areas of a room not used, using brighter lights than necessary, and using incandescent bulbs rather than the new compact fluorescent bulbs.

**Appliances** account for about 20 percent of annual home energy consumption. Refrigerators, washers and dryers are prime candidates for replacement by Energy Star-rated models.

You can conduct tests for these problems on your own or look for an energy auditor. A more thorough inspection and assessment will be done by a professional auditor who can run specialized tests. One is a blower door test which finds air leaks by forcing air out of your home, which lowers the internal air pressure and causes air to flow back into the home through leaks. A thermographic scan can also be used, indicating where heat is escaping.

For information contact:

Energy Star-Home Energy Yardstick at [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm) or Home Energy Saver <http://hes.lbl.gov/>

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### **Hawkwatch, Continued from page 3**

valley and is handicap accessible. It is a great place to watch sunsets. The Lodge is under renovation and will reopen later this year as a nature center.

## **September Field Trip Report**

By Loren & Babs Padelford

In spite of the rainy forecast, seventeen birders showed up for the Omaha Audubon field trip to Schramm State Recreation Area in Sarpy County on

Saturday, Sept. 9.

Birding before lunch was a bit slow but it picked up after lunch when we checked water habitat on the Platte River. In addition to birds spotted, we saw roosting bats (probably Big Brown Bats). American Rubyspot (broad-winged damselfly) and six species of butterflies.

In addition to the common birds, sightings included these both on the trails and on the River.

## Work Day at Vincent Bluff

There is a special feeling about early fall that can inspire you to drink in the different sounds, the different slant of light, the quiet feeling. For now, you don't want to think about the approaching darker skies and the cold. For a time, you can let your senses deceive you. But change is in the air. Things are about to happen.

Some things are happening at a prairie near you on Saturday, October 14, when the Loess Hills Preservation Society will hold a volunteer work day at Vincent Bluff Preserve in Council Bluffs.

Volunteers will be doing physical work, so please wear comfortable work clothes. If possible, bring work gloves and cutting tools (i.e. bow saws, loppers). Bring water and snacks as amenities are limited.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the site. Directions to the preserve: from I 80 (eastbound), take the Madison Avenue exit (exit #5), turn left onto Madison Avenue; at the second stop light, take a left onto Woodbury Avenue and go about half a mile. Take a right onto Thallas Street. End of Thallas will be the parking area.

For more information, contact Larry Tibbles at [larry.tibbles@hotmail.com](mailto:larry.tibbles@hotmail.com) or 712 527-5011 or 402 669-0537 cell.

Great Egret (22)	Red-headed Woodpecker
Snowy Egret (1)	Yellow-throated Vireo
Bald Eagle (6)	Red-eyed Vireo
Green Heron	Warbling Vireo
Double-crested Cormorant	Tufted Titmouse
Osprey	Gray Catbird
Peregrine Falcon	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Greater Yellowlegs	Belted Kingfisher
Lesser Yellowlegs	Eastern Bluebird
Spotted Sandpiper	Chipping Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	Carolina Wren
Semipalmated Plover (4)	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Baird's Sandpiper (4)	Yellow Warbler
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Black-throated Green Warbler
Pectoral Sandpiper	Black-and-White Warbler
Forster's Tern (13)	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Chimney Swift	Baltimore Oriole
Eastern Pewee	
Eastern Phoebe	

**Emma Johnson  
Remembered**

Well-known Audubon Society of Omaha member, Emma Johnson, died on August 31.

She is remembered for her long service and participation in ASO, serving on the Board for many years in the 1970's and 1980's. She was preceded in death by her husband, Clyde Johnson, who held offices in ASO.

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### *Bookbreaks*

By Nancy Leonard

I am going to break a rule in this column, but I am not going to apologize for it. This month I am reviewing a book that I have not finished yet. That is the broken rule: Never review a book until you have finished it. But I am far enough along to recognize that it is an interesting, well-written book on a subject most of us will find fascinating; hence the lack of apology.

Don Strap, author of "A Parrot Without A Name," has written "**Birdsong, A Natural History.**" In it he followed one of the world's foremost experts on birdsong, Dan Kroodsma, Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Massachusetts, as he and his grad students tramp the woods of Martha's Vineyard and Costa Rica recording the songs of chickadees and Wattled Bellbird. A simple question such as "Why do birds sing?" leads to "Why do they sing different songs at different times of day?" and then on to "Why do birds in different areas sing different songs?" Are songs genetically imprinted or are they taught and learned?

both a bird and a bird-headed man with their mouths open. Are they singing? In Slovenia, a flute made of a bear's thighbone was estimated to be 44,000 years old. When a replica was played in 2000, the tones sounded like birdsong. Birdsong shows up in Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, Respighi's "The Pines of Rome," and James Fassett's "Symphony of Birds," to name a few. And that doesn't begin to take into account Mozart's pet starling.

Strap also follows Greg Budney, Curator of the Macaulay Library of Natural Songs at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, at a sound recording workshop. There are stories of the dangers faced in fieldwork and an impassioned plea to conserve the forests where these bird divas sing.

This book does a wonderful job of making the reader feel as if she is there in the field: standing still in the dark, waiting for the first glimpses of dawn, worrying if she forgot the extra recording tape, and hoping that the tree she has picked will be the lucky one where the

Mixed in with absorbing accounts of field work and personality clashes in the scientific community is a chapter on music which looks at whether birdsong is really music. The world's oldest art, the Lascaux cave paintings, show

bird chooses to sing. It also illuminates science in action and the profound curiosity that drives the passion to question and, ultimately, know some of nature's secrets. I heartily recommend it.

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home from an exciting bird outing with uncertainties about species, you can search on the CD using color, habitat or other data to identify your sightings.

If you don't find the Thayer CD in local

**Cornell Lab of Ornithology's  
Guide to Birds of North  
America**

Nancy Leonard's book review, above, may send some among us scrambling to find recorded bird songs to improve our identification successes.

Thayer Birding offers a CD with photos of birds, most having the song available with a click of the mouse, while viewing the bird. This is the next best thing to seeing and hearing a bird in the field that I have found. The images are clear and the sound is fine, recorded by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Also on the CD are several kinds of tests for the fun of checking yourself or to reveal the gaps in your skills, plus facts about geographic distribution, season of appearance, migration routes. When you come

bird supply stores, you can shop at Thayer's web address: [www.ThayerBirding.com](http://www.ThayerBirding.com). The CD also makes a fine gift for a budding birder or someone you would like to convert to this fascinating hobby.

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## 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)  
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## Audubon Society

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The *Audubon Magazine*\*(see below, chapter-only membership)  
and your membership card will be sent to this address:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Introductory Membership

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Phone: (202) 225-4806

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6031

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1819 Farnam St, Omaha NE 68183

Phone: 444-5000 Hot Line: 444-  
5555

## Memorials

The Audubon Society of  
Omaha greatly appreciates  
the memorials it receives.

When sending your 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 68103-0542

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha

19612 Ridgeway Road

Plattsmouth NE 68048

PO 3

7XCH

## Bequests

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

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

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**Audubon Society of Omaha, Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103-05**

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

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**President Elliott Bedows....292-5017**

**1st Vice President Jackie Scholar.....551-5045**

**2nd Vice President Nelli Falzgraf.....292-9687**

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**Nancy Leonard.....330-3888 Eric Scholar.....551-5045**

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**Omaha Raptor Team Jenny Henricksen.....895-5487**

**Program Nancy Leonard.....330-3888**

**Publication Laurine Blankenau.....451-3647**

**Publicity Jackie Scholar.....551-5045**

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**Carol Rasmussen.....731-3939**

**Speakers Bureau Eunice Levisay.....393-0545**

**Historian Kathleen Rose.....292-8912**

**ASO State Board Rep. Mace Hack.....934-5040**

**NAS Board Member Ione Werthman..... 493-0373**

*The Meadowlark* is published monthly September through May, plus a summer issue. The newsletter may be accessed on our web site, <http://audubon-omaha.org>

Send address changes to Kathy Schwery, 19612 Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth NE 68048.

**Membership Kathy Schwery.....296-  
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