

# 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 2013  
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*ASO is a Chapter of the National  
Audubon Society Serving Eastern Nebraska  
and Western Iowa*

## January 10th General Meeting

### **Birds and the Bees: A Closer Look at the Interactions of Birds and Insects in Nature presented by Tony Palmer.**

Birds and insects are important, abundant organisms in almost every habitat on the planet. However, many people do not consider how these two groups are interrelated. Our speaker for the January 10<sup>th</sup> general meeting, Tony Palmer, will look at some of the common and more bizarre relationships between these organisms. Topics covered will be predator prey relationships, insect defenses against birds, parasites of birds, and conserving birds and insects. This is a chance for general naturalists, Birders or Buggers, to come together and realize that the animals we enjoy could not exist without one another.

Tony Palmer grew up in eastern Ohio and attended Dana College where he attained a bachelors degree in biology. His focus on entomology led to his being hired at Henry Doorly Zoo where he is a keeper at the Aquarium's Butterfly and Insect Pavilion. He was awarded a scholarship to

attend the Imperiled Butterfly Conservation and Management Workshop which enabled him to visit a number of other programs around the US that are working with imperiled species of butterflies. With the information learned from this program, the zoo's education department and he are getting ready to launch a statewide, citizen-science based butterfly monitoring program for Nebraska. When not working, Tony is an avid photographer and can often be found in the field documenting insects and their behavior. When the weather turns cold, he switches to watching birds and has a life list of over 200 species.

Please plan to attend this interesting program at our general meeting **Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, at 7 pm** at Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St (one block south of 45<sup>th</sup> and Center). The program will be followed by a brief business meeting and social hour with cookies. Everyone is welcome to attend and there is no cost. **Bring your dead batteries of all kinds, print cartridges, and no-longer-useable small electronics to the meeting for recycling.**

## January 19th Field Trip

The next ASO Field Trip will be held on January 19, 2013. We will meet at the Fontenelle Forest Nature Center at 9am and check out the feeders. From there we will go southward to Kathy Schwery's residence in Cass County. If anyone is still open to it, we will then visit the Mercer Manor in Midtown and check out a feeding station situated on one of the highest elevated points in the city.

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## MIDWINTER BIRD SEED SALE

If you are getting low on bird seed, here is your chance to stock up again. Audubon will have an Email Bird Seed Sale with pickup delivery date on February 16th, 2013. The only pickup site will be Neal Ratzlaff's garage near 84th and Brentwood.

If we don't have your Email address already, you can send us a message at [katcr@cox.net](mailto:katcr@cox.net) or download the order form from the Audubon-Omaha.org website after January 6th. We will Email an order form on January 6th to

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## Birdscaping

By Justin Rink

The lakes may be covered with a thick layer of ice, and snow may cover the ground (maybe). That's no excuse to delay planning for next year's growing season. What better way to kick off January than to explain birdscaping.

What is birdscaping, you may ask? It is getting ready for the upcoming spring season by planting flora that is attractive to avian life. This includes secluded areas, places to feed, an area to raise young, and safe zones for birds. Using a tier method to plant is one of the best ways to start.

First you will want to start out small with some groundcover like certain ivies or other sort of attractive groundcover. Perennials will also work in this situation. Placing larger perennials such as native coneflowers behind this lower growing vegetation will provide an excellent second-layer tier. Even annuals such as certain salvia will provide a seasonal hummingbird haven. The lowest tier will serve as a great scratching ground for your visiting sparrows such as White-throated, Lincoln's, and Song. Towhees will also relish scratching around in your low vegetation.

Next you will want to choose some small to medium sized shrubs such as beautyberry or a type of spirea. In the coming years, the beautyberry will

produce fruit and will serve as a smorgasbord for species such as Cedar Waxwings, American Robins, and even the occasional Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, or Hermit Thrush.

The next shrub should be taller and fuller such as Elderberry, Viburnum, or a Burning Bush. Each one of these will produce fruit in addition to serving as a refuge from predators, or an area of seclusion to raise a family. Species that would nest in this area include Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, Northern Cardinals, and Northern Mockingbirds. Interspersing these with low-growing evergreens such as yews can also be a benefit to winter visitants seeking dense shrubbery in which to relax or hide.



Northern Cardinal by Chris A. Chelf

The final tier are moderate to large trees such as Hackberry, Maple, or Oak. It may take several years (or decades) for these trees to reach their full potential,

but the wait is worth it. Native Hackberry trees may be gorged on by American Robins and other various thrush species. Cedar Waxwings will also benefit from the bountiful fruit. Meanwhile Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers create sap wells from these trees, and lap up the nutrient-rich ooze while also feasting on the insects they attract.

Maples and Oaks may reach a very large size. These trees attract a myriad of insects which makes them so attractive to visiting migrants such as warblers, vireos, tanagers, cuckoos, thrushes, orioles, vireos: the list goes on. Many of these species may be seen foraging high within the canopy during the spring for insect life, as their various songs spiral down from the treetops.

Of course it is also always a good idea to have a fresh water source and some food available for your hungry seed-eating visitors. This is especially true during the spring due to the fact that the bountiful crop from the year before is nearly depleted by this time.

Take a look around your yard to see what you can do this year and in the future to make your property a birdscaped paradise.

The Audubon Society of Omaha Student Art Contest 2013 will be Saturday, April 6th from 12:00 pm to 3:30 pm at the Bellevue University Gordon Lozier Center, 1000 Galvin Rd. South, Bellevue, NE.

## Audubon Society of Omaha Student Art Contest

The Audubon Society of Omaha Student Art Contest 2013 will be Saturday, April 6th from 12:00 pm to 3:30 pm at the Bellevue University Gordon Lozier Center, 1000 Galvin Rd. South, Bellevue, NE.

The art contest is for Grades K through 12 and the theme is Birds of the Midwest or Endangered Bird Species. The deadline for submission of entries is Saturday, February 23rd.

Entries must be brought to the Audubon Office at the Center Mall-lower level at 42<sup>nd</sup> & Center on Friday, February 22nd from 4:00 to 6:00 pm or on Saturday, February 23rd from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The Award Ceremony will be held on Saturday, April 6th, at 2:00 pm. All art works will be on display at the Bellevue University campus. Students are asked to pick up their artwork after the ceremony on April 6th. Rules and other details will be posted on the Audubon Society of Omaha webpage: [www.audubon-omaha.org](http://www.audubon-omaha.org)

For questions or to **volunteer**, please contact Jackie Scholar at 402-551-5045 or [jbscholar@cox.net](mailto:jbscholar@cox.net)

## Winter Bird Seed Sale

*Continued from page 1...*

all of our previous customers who have given us an Email address.

This has been a great year for visiting seed eaters so load up now on niger seed and sunflower hearts to keep your finch feeders full.

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## Rivers and Wildlife Celebration

by Kevin Poague

The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration will be held March 21-24 in Kearney, Nebraska, the sandhill crane capital of the world. Organized by Audubon Nebraska, the conference gathers together nature enthusiasts from across the country to witness the migration of over half a million sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl and other birds through central Nebraska. Events include guided field trips to local birding hotspots; the Wild Experience Room, with live raptor and reptile presentations on Saturday, which are free to the public; and daily visits to river blinds operated by Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary for up-close views of cranes roosting on the Platte River.

Local and national speakers will present information on a variety of wildlife and conservation topics. Keynote speakers are author, wildlife biologist, and

falconer Dan O'Brien; and Noppadol Paothong, staff photographer at the [Missouri Department of Conservation](http://Missouri Department of Conservation).

Registration materials can be found beginning in January at [nebraskacranefestival.org](http://nebraskacranefestival.org). For more information, call or write Audubon Nebraska: [Nebraska@audubon.org](mailto:Nebraska@audubon.org); 402/797-2301. Rowe Sanctuary has information about viewing the sandhill crane migration, 308/468-5282; [rowe.audubon.org](http://rowe.audubon.org).

### January

The months of the year, from January to June, are a geometric progression in the abundance of distractions. In January one may follow a skunk track, or search for bands on chickadees, or see what young pines the deer have browsed, or what muskrat houses the mink have dug, with only an occasional and mild digression into other things. January observations can be almost as simple and peaceful as snow, and almost as continuous as cold. There is time not only to see who has done what, but to speculate why.

Aldo Leopold

## Iowa's Winter Owls Field Trip with Don Poggensee

by John Carlini, Wachiska Audubon Society

Keen powers of observation and hours of dedicated searching are two important ingredients in Don Poggensee's success at finding so many interesting wintering owls over the years near Ida Grove, Iowa. This year will mark his 23rd winter for locating fantastic little northern saw-whet owls in the conifer plantings of Moorehead Park. Most observers would agree that these miniature owls are a real treat to see (unless you're a mouse). Don has generously offered to help us find this species on our January field trip to northwest Iowa. Last winter Don took time to share the Ida Grove owls with visitors from 14 different states. In addition to being an unofficial ambassador for the owls, he is an outstanding photographer who also teaches photography, a former corporate pilot, and a knowledgeable birder. As with most wildlife outings, we can't guarantee an owl encounter; however, Don found four wintering in the park this season and is confident we'll see at least one. On our way home, we'll detour past the Owego Wetlands Complex to look for short-eared owls, another winter visitor that can often be seen in that area during daylight hours. Don observed seven at Owego in mid-December.

Meet at **9:00 a.m. Sunday, January 13**, on the south side of the State Capitol in Lincoln, 15th

& H streets, across from the governor's mansion. From there we'll caravan and carpool 150 miles to Ida Grove. Participants may want to bring a sack lunch, snacks, and beverages or purchase refreshments at rest stops along the way. Bring binoculars and scope if you have them and dress for winter temperatures as we plan to spend some time outside. Our arrival time back in Lincoln will be around 7:30 p.m. There is no fee and the public is welcome. Birders in the Omaha area preferring to join the group en route can contact me to arrange a meeting place. If you have questions call John at 402-475-7275.

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## ASO Presidents Win Major Award

by Jer Toll

Three of Audubon Society of Omaha's presidents, current and past, entered into competition with other Audubon Chapters last spring and nearly came out on top. Audubon Alaska sponsored the Great American Arctic Birding Challenge in which teams competed to find as many of the species of birds, in their own state, that occurs at the Arctic Wildlife Refuge near Barrow, Alaska.

The team, semi-aptly named The Lame Duck Prez, came in third place with 110 species well behind the winners in Washington State with 145 species. Said team member Clem Klaphake, "In competition against Washington State, we were at a disadvantage. Most of our gulls and waterfowl

are already gone by the starting date of March 1 and Washington State shares much of the same seabirds and waterfowl with Alaska". Not to be outdone by a fellow teammate, Justin pooh-poohed the loss by saying "The competition presented a unique challenge much like an ancient videogame, Super Vireo Brothers, whereas you try to see (catch) as many birds in a limited timeframe without getting knocked out."

Said the third member of the team, Jer Toll, whose sole contribution to the challenge was to know about it and to recruit ringers Justin and Clem, "It was fun."

The competition ended May 30<sup>th</sup> and with much prompting and emails flying, we were notified of our win on November 11<sup>th</sup>. The much anticipated prizes, an Audubon Alaska T-shirt and window sticker of a spectacled eider that doesn't stick very well, arrived 12/12/12 and were dispersed to team members.

The team members, ever thoughtful, demonstrated what was said by pundits during the Summer Olympics. Winning is most desirable but second place winners are plagued by the doubt that if they had just done this or that a little bit better, they would have won. Third place winners are just happy to be on the podium. Team members have already begun work on the assault of the 2013 Birding Challenge. They are planning to glut the team with western Nebraska birders and may just increase the Arctic list by 15 species.

## Addresses to Remember

### President Barack Obama

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington D.C. 20500-0001  
Comments: 202-456-1111

### Senator Deb Fischer

U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510;  
Lincoln phone: 402-742-0084;

### Senator Michael Johanns

U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 202-224-4224  
Lincoln: 402 476-1400

100 Centennial Mall N Rm 294, Lincoln NE 68508-3803

### Representative Lee Terry

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: 202-225-4155; Fax: 202-226-5452  
Omaha Address: 11717 Burt St, Omaha 68154  
Omaha phone: 402-397-9944

### Representative Jeff Fortenberry

House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: -202-225-4806  
Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598  
Lincoln Address:

### Governor Dave Heineman

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848 Lincoln, NE 68509  
Phone: 402-471-2244; Fax: 402-471-6031

### Mayor Jim Suttle

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

## 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

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

We offer two choices of membership: one includes membership in National Audubon as well as in our local chapter, receiving the *Audubon Magazine* and our newsletter, *The Meadowlark*. A portion of the dues is returned to our local chapter.

The other choice is local membership only: this includes receiving *The Meadowlark* and participation in all of our local activities. Dues all go to our chapter.

### **Membership in the National Audubon Society**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### **Introductory Membership (1st & 2nd Year) \$20 Make check payable to National Audubon Society**

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha  
19612 Ridgeway Road  
Plattsmouth, NE 68048 COZCP030Z

### **Membership in The Audubon Society of Omaha only**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### **Make check for \$20 payable to Audubon Society of Omaha**

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha  
19612 Ridgeway Road  
Plattsmouth, NE 68048 COZCP030Z

## Bequests

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

Audubon Society of Omaha Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103 - 0542

Phone: 402-451-3647 - <http://audubon-omaha.org>

Office: 1941 So. 42nd Street, Omaha, NE 68105

Elected Officers:

President	Justin Rink	904-415-3282
1st Vice President	Jackie Scholar	551-5045
2nd Vice President	Laurine Blankenau	451-3647
Past President	Jerry Toll	453-9239
Treasurer	Dennis Kingery	556-9082
Recording Sec'y	Nelli Falzgraf	292-9687
Corres. Sec'y	Ann Boice	315-1884
<u>Elected Directors:</u>	Jamie Vann	733-1891
	Elliott Bedows	292-5017
	Jonas Grundman	216-5413
	Bob Fuchs	553-8242
	Tad Leeper	670-5919
	Eric Scholar	551-5045

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation	Bob Fuchs	553-8242
Education	Clem Klaphake	292-2276
Field Trip	Justin Rink	904-415-8279
Finance	Nelli Falzgraf	292-9687
Fund Raising	Vacant	
Membership	Kathy Schwery	296-4788
Program	Jerry Toll	453-9239
Natural Areas Mgt	Eric Scholar	551-5045
Publication	Jamie Vann	733-1891
	Laurine Blankenau	451-3647
Publicity	Jackie Scholar	551-5045

Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Chairs	Kathleen Rose	292-8912
	Carole Rasmussen	731-3939
Speakers Bureau	Eunice Levisay	393-0545
Historian	Eric Scholar	551-5045
NAS Board Member	Peter Cannon	608-251-1276

*The Meadowlark* is published monthly  
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audubon-omaha.org](http://audubon-omaha.org)

Send address changes to Kathy Schwery,  
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e-mail [djschw@windstream.com](mailto:djschw@windstream.com).

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