
Birding in Trinidad and Tobago

Late Fall Field Trip to DeSoto

By Clem Klaphake

If you are thinking of traveling to a wonderful place and at the same time getting away from a Nebraska winter, then come and join the Audubon Society of Omaha on a video trip to Trinidad and Tobago.

At our November 11th general meeting, Dick and Sharon Stilwell of Des Moines, Iowa, will share one of the many birding trips they have taken to the West Indies, Central America, and South America.

Dick has retired from the Research and Development Department of the Maytag Company, and Sharon has retired from Meredith Publishing where she was Test Kitchen Director for 25 years. Currently Dick is the President of Des Moines Audubon, and Sharon is Vice-President of the Iowa Ornithologist's Union.

In addition to their video presentation on Trinidad (especially the Asa Wright Nature Center) and Tobago, the Stilwells will be glad to share their other birding experiences outside of the U.S. They recently returned from a trip to Peru where, according to Dick, the culture and history was nearly as impressive as the birding.

For those of you who have never been on a birding trip outside of the United States, this will be a great opportunity to see and hear about an exciting place to go birding without traveling thousands of miles.

To preview some of Dick's beautiful bird photos from Trinidad and Tobago, go to www.pbases.com/stilwellr/iou.meeting and click on Trinidad and Tobago.

Come join us Thursday, November 11, 7:30 P.M. at Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances (one block south of 45th & Center).

Sharon and Dick will be glad to answer any questions regarding the places they have been and their experiences while staying there. A short business meeting will follow the program, concluding with coffee, cookies, and conversation. Nonmembers are always welcome.

By Clem Klaphake

Late November birding is always a guessing game as to what to expect to see. I won't label this field trip with any target bird this year. What are some possibilities? Of course there is always the speculation as to when the Snow Geese (and the Bald Eagles breathing down their necks) will arrive, or if they will skip over DeSoto and head on down to Squaw Creek NWR in Missouri or arrive late/early.

On Saturday, November 20, we will meet at the Neale Woods Nature Center parking lot at 7:30 A.M. and arrange for car pooling. Depending on where various places are with their deer hunts, we will head toward DeSoto NWR.

Birds of note seen last year at DeSoto were Common Loon, Purple Finch, Rough-legged Hawk, Screech Owl, and Bonaparte's Gull. Of course there were lots of waterfowl species present also.

All levels of birding expertise are welcome. These field trips are a good way for beginning birders to learn more about identifying bird field marks and a great opportunity for more experienced birders to share their knowledge and skills with future birders. Hope to see many of you on the 20th. Dress appropriately, for the weather possibilities can range widely at this time of the year. If you wish to spend more than a half-day birding, you may want to bring a lunch. Or, if you prefer to eat at a nearby restaurant, there is one east of DeSoto along I-29 and one west of DeSoto in Blair.

Goose Counts Held at DeSoto

By Jerry Toll

For more than 20 years, members of ASO have assisted DeSoto NWR in the annual goose counts in November. On Wednesday mornings, when the Snow Geese are present on the Refuge, counters watch the Snows

leave the Refuge and get a count of what they see. It is the best way to celebrate and be a part of this wondrous migration. It can also be a time of stillness and contemplation as the sun rises and the Refuge awakens. Contact Bob Barry, 642-5404, or bob_barry@fws.gov for inclusion on a list to be called.

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By Nelli Falzgraf

Nelli's Notes

Environmental and Educational Services

Thank you to volunteers for providing and making possible environmental services that benefit our community. We appreciate your initiative and talents.

Patty Albright organized the ASO booth at the September 25/26 Autumn in the Bluffs celebration in Council Bluffs, a new event led by a new Treasurer. Glenn Pollock led hikes to Vincent Prairie for the Loess Hills Preservation Society. Volunteers who set up, staffed, sold merchandise and birdseed, and represented Audubon and the Raptor Team were Patty Albright, George Allen, JoDee Zalud, Jenny Henricksen, Laurine Blankenau, Pauline Dickey, Patricia Fuller, and Nelli Falzgraf.

Jenny Henricksen of the Omaha Raptor Team brought exciting birds of prey to Autumn in the Bluffs, drew appreciative crowds, and connected us to nature. The Team has partnered with ASO since 1999 and provides professional programs to educate youths and adults on raptors and their conservation. We commend and congratulate the ORT for winning first place in the Omaha World-

Allen Hills housing area in Washington County. This preserves the natural condition of the land, makes it available as wildlife habitat, and reduces the expense of the landowner.

A conservation easement is a recorded restriction of the title of land and limits the owner's development of its property, thereby reducing its value. If the owner, such as the Heartland Acreage Development and its assign, the Allen Hills Homeowners Association, transfers the easement to a nonprofit, such as ASO, the owner can take a charitable deduction for the amount of value it has transferred (Stewardships Fund) and is liable for a lesser amount of annual property taxes.

The holder of the conservation easement does not have title to the property, is not obligated to maintain it, and is not liable for claims relating to it. If ASO no longer wants to hold the easement, it may transfer it to another nonprofit or a government entity, or, with consent of the owner, petition the district court to terminate the easement. We may inspect the property to ensure compliance of covenants and, with prior notification, visit for nature or educational studies.

Herald Master Conservationists competition (Midlands section, Sunday, September 26).

Sharon Draper compiles volunteer jobs and hours that help maintain tax exemption and document project hours funded by grants. She served admirably as Treasurer to keep track of funds, provided financial data for the Board, budget, NAS, State of Nebraska, IRS, and even kept the unofficial but precise list of ASO-only contests. She is in charge of a bluebird nest box trail near Gifford Farm.

Bob Fuchs helped with joint Sierra Club/ASO events on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and presented programs on Backyard Habitats. He worked with Club and Chapter members to remove dozens of old Kestrel nest boxes and monitors newer ones on spring-loaded poles on I-80 rest stops. He is Editor of the Birding Club newsletter and helps with Bird Counts, Hawkwatch, and Art Contests.

Bechara Embaid organized successful Birdathons that raised funds for prairie and wetland upkeep, Raptor Team bird care, and educational activities such as Art Contest and outreach programs. He presented Coral Reef programs, helped with promotional events and environmental efforts, and serves as Building Supervisor.

Allen Hills Conservation Easement

Over five and a half years ago, the Heartland Acreage Development gave us a Stewardship Fund to maintain a conservation easement on 52 acres of green space in the

This year's inspection team included Glenn Pollock, Laurine Blankenau, and Nelli Falzgraf.

The owner pays real estate taxes, maintains liability and property insurance, and defends the property against claims. There is an agreement that the owner would manage the woodland to reduce risk of injury from falling trees, mow the prairie to control noxious weeds, and maintain underground lines for electronic services to the subdivision. If the property is sold, the new owner is subject to the easement because it is recorded and "runs with the land."

This is a win-win legal means for habitat conservation because green space can be preserved and expenses of environmental stewardship reduced.

Next month: conservation easement as it applies to our Prairie Preserve.

November Calendar

Nov 3 (Wed) Board Meeting

Nov 10 (Mon) Natural Legacy Mtg, Chalco

Nov 11 (Thu) General Meeting

Nov 20 (Sat) DeSoto Field Trip

October Field Trip Migrants

About 22 of us ventured out on Saturday, October 16, to find a variety of fall migrants, especially sparrows.

Thank You to Bird Seed Sale Helpers

By Jerry Toll

Audubon wishes to thank all who helped

The day got off to a poor start when we were informed by the Boyer Chute NWR warden that the Refuge Island, prime birdable sparrow habitat along the Missouri River in NE, was closed due to a deer hunt.

So we picked up our toys and moved over the River into Iowa and birded several roads and scrubby areas, actually the planned agenda for the afternoon anyway. As the morning progressed and the winds picked up out of the north, we found ourselves `migrating' closer and closer to Hitchcock Nature Center for an afternoon of hawk watching. I counted a total of 41 species including the following highlights: (these do not include the official Hitchcock hawk count numbers).

Pied-billed Grebe 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Rough-legged Hawk 1, Enough Wild Turkeys to literally block No. River Road as they crossed (25-30 anyway); **Killdeer 2-3, Franklin's Gulls** one flock of 35-40, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2, Black-capped Chickadee 1, Eastern Bluebirds 50-60, Yellow-rumped Warbler 3-4, Pine Siskin 1, Sparrows: American Tree 2, Chipping 2, Clay-colored 1-2, Field 3, Savannah 2, Fox 2, Song 2, Lincoln's 10** (conservatively for this and the next two species), **White-throated 20-25, Harris' 20-25, and White-crowned 2.** First-time ever misses for this trip were Eastern Towhee, Vesper and Swamp Sparrows, each seen every other day during the week while scouting.

By Elliott Bedows

make the annual Bird Seed Sale a success.

The contributions of many, no matter how small or how large, strengthen an all-volunteer organization like the Audubon Society of Omaha.

Thank you all!

Help Conserve Bird Habitat

The Nebraska Legacy Project needs information from knowledgeable persons about the location of desirable wildlife habitat in our state and what might be done to protect or enhance it.

The Project's work relies on voluntary participation by landowners. Economic benefits are looked for in the form of ecotourism. A landowner may open trails for birders or nature hikers for a small fee for individuals or groups and in this way benefit from the conservation measures.

If you know of crucial bird habitat and have ideas about needed improvements, please share your information at a meeting to be held at Chalco Hills Monday, November 15, at 7:00 p.m.

Eventually the Project will need workers, but for now, your knowledge and advice is all that is required. We hope to see many of you at the meeting.

Mangelsen Photo Raffle

A Tom Mangelsen photo of a Red-bellied Woodpecker has been donated to ASO. We are offering the photo as a raffle prize, with the proceeds to help pay for ASO's programs. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$25; they will be sold at our general meetings. Or fill out, clip the form to the right, and mail it to the address shown. No date has been set for the drawing.

Photo Raffle Ticket: \$5 each, 6 for \$25 Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Plans are to display the photo at the Nov. 11 general meeting and perhaps others. Join us for our program(s) and for a view of the photo, or access www.imagesofnature.com. Questions? Call 932-8205.

Send check to Audubon Society
of Omaha

2534 Benson Gardens Blvd.

Omaha NE 68134

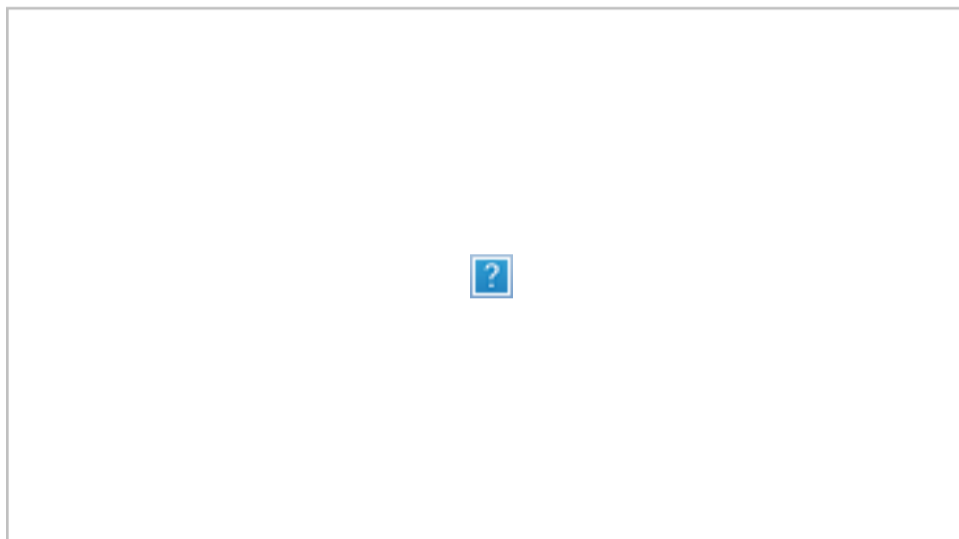


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Just Out - By Michael Forsberg

On Ancient Wings -

The Sandhill Cranes of North America

Rising from sandbars on the Platte River with clarion calls, the Sandhill Crane (*Grus Canadensis*) feels the urgency of spring migration. Elegant, noble and spiritual, the Sandhill is one of the most ancient of all birds. More than a half-million strong, flying in squadrons, these majestic creatures point northward to their Arctic and sub-Arctic breeding ranges. Theirs is an epic story of life endurance through the ages.

With stunningly beautiful photography, *On Ancient Wings* presents Sandhills in their wild, but increasingly compromised, habitats today. With an intimate lens, Nebraska photographer

On Ancient Wings intertwines the lives of cranes, people and their common places to tell a timeless story at a time when Sandhill Cranes and their wetland and grassland habitats face daunting prospects.

**Publisher: Michael Forsberg
Photography**

168 pages; 11x11 inches

153 photos, maps, resource pages

Hardbound. Price: \$45 plus \$5 for shipping & tax.

and author Michael Forsberg documents the tall gray birds from the Alaskan tundra, to the arid High Plains, to Cuban nature preserves and suburban backyards.

With an eye for beauty, an ear to those for whom cranes matter most, and an uncommon persistence, the author shares his discoveries during a five-year journey across North America. This personal exploration documents the cranes' challenges to adapt and survive in a rapidly changing natural world, and argues that humankind, for its own sake, should secure their place in the future.

You may order from Rowe Sanctuary, 308-468-5282, or rowe@nctc.net, for \$45 plus \$5 including shipping and tax, with all proceeds going to Rowe for conservation work on the Central Platte River.

For personally signed copies, you may order directly from the Michael Forsberg Gallery in Lincoln's Historic Haymarket District, 100 North 8th Street, Suite 150, Lincoln NE 68502. Orders can be placed by coming to the gallery, calling toll free 1-888-812-3790, or accessing www.michaelforsberg.com>

Signed copies will also be available at ASO's Spring Banquet in May where Michael will be the speaker, and at the Bookworm bookstore in Omaha at a book signing Sunday, November 21.

A Tribute to Loren Blake

Loren Blake, known to all of his friends as "Bub," entered many of our lives on a fall evening in the late 1980's. The occasion was the traditional shared nature slide session at the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Fall Field Days. Rumors circulated about a Sandhills rancher interested in birds and photography who was going to show up with a few slides he had taken 'around the ranch.' And show up he did, with a carousel of his best!

The room was soon buzzing with Oohs, Aahs, and Wows as Bub dazzled us with his crisp, well-composed photos of everything from sparrows to herons.

Over the years, the slides continued with an ever-widening range of locations, all the way to Texas and Bosque del Apache, and our friendship for this soft-spoken, diminutive rancher grew. His photos began to appear elsewhere, including *Nebraskaland Magazine*.

Members of ASO will remember his presentation at one

By Neal Ratzlaff

of our meetings, particularly the Burrowing Owl slides, which document the sequential appearance of 7 owls, one owl at a time, a sequence which, perhaps best demonstrated his remarkable patience and passion for nature.

After he retired from the ranch, Bub was a regular springtime volunteer at Rowe Sanctuary where he served as a tour guide and gave lectures and photo presentations on cranes. He also spent considerable time working and volunteering at the Ashfall Fossil Beds where he developed a very successful bluebird route.

Bub left us much the same way he came. Quietly, without fanfare or advance notice. But his photos and the words of St. Francis that accompanied his presentations remain with us.

"All things bright and beautiful. All creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful. The Lord God made them all."

Birding is Big Business in Nebraska

Birding is the fastest growing outdoor activity in America. And for Nebraska's ecotourism, bird and wildlife watching mean big dollars and big business. In 2001 alone it meant:

\$247.1 million in statewide economic impact

3,248 Nebraska jobs

\$13.3 million in taxes for state and federal government

25% of Nebraska residents participate in bird watching (386,000 people), 3% higher than the national average.

(2001 National and State Economic Impacts of Wildlife Watching, USFWS Report 2001-02; Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis, USFWS Report 2001-1)

Nebraska's Special Places

Nebraska offers its residents and tourists some of the most beautiful natural areas in the country, providing memorable birding and wildlife watching activities:

• Platte River/Iain Nicolson Audubon Center & Rowe Sanctuary

• Missouri River/Fontenelle Forest

• Niobrara River

• Sandhills

• Tallgrass Prairies/Spring Creek Audubon Center

• Rainwater Basin

• Seven National Wildlife Refuges

• Three National Forests

• Eight National (or nationally maintained) Monuments, Memorials, Trails, and Historical Sites

• Nebraska Game & Parks Commission State Parks & Recreation Areas

By Desiree Groves and Kevin Poague substantially. We need a robust program to address problems early on to avoid costly, intensive measures for the recovery of these species. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Over 85% of our nation's wildlife species (non-game species) are not hunted or fished and have no reliable funding source. Audubon is asking to fund the SWG Program at \$125 million for FY '05, of which \$1.4 million, will go to Nebraska. Past funding has been used to preserve critical grassland habitat for species of great concern such as the Burrowing Owl, Mountain Plover, and Ferruginous Hawk. The State Office has received two state wildlife grants to initiate an Important Bird Areas Program.

Agriculture-based Conservation Funding

Fully fund the conservation programs included in Title II of the Agriculture Appropriations Bill for FY '05. Fully funding these programs not only helps farmers and rural communities but also improves water quality, preserves agricultural land, and protects and dramatically increases critical bird and wildlife habitat. Programs include the Conservation Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, and Farmland Protection Program.

Defense Exemptions from

Environmental Laws

Please oppose efforts to grant any government agency new exemptions from environmental laws! There remains no compelling evidence that environmental laws have impeded the military's readiness activities. In fact, a June 2002 U.S. General Accounting Office report on military training found readiness, as reported in official reports from DoD, remains high, and DoD's

Nebraska is on the migration route for the endangered Whooping Crane and is home to other threatened and endangered birds such as the Piping Plover and Least Tern. By making a small investment now in protecting Watchlist species—those that are on the brink of being candidates for federal listing—and their habitat, we can save the millions of dollars it would take to bring a species back from the brink of extinction.

Help Keep This Industry Thriving

The federally funded State Wildlife Grant Program helps state agencies and partner organizations like Audubon prevent species from becoming endangered. As a species gets closer to extinction, the costs of bringing it back increase

efforts are not being hurt by adhering to environmental laws as written. And, as the President already has the ability to exempt government agencies (including DoD) from our nation's laws, environmental laws among them, when national security is at risk, there is simply no established need to grant any government agency such broad exemption.

Audubon Facts and Stats

State Office: Audubon Nebraska - Lincoln

Audubon Chapters: Four, located throughout state

Audubon Centers: Two

Audubon Members: 2,932 and growing!

Addresses to Remember

President George W. Bush

The White House, 1600
Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington D.C. 20500-0001

Comments: 202-456-1111;
fax: 202-456-2993

Senator Ben Nelson

U.S. Senate, Washington
DC 20510; 202-224-6551;
fax 202-228-0012; Lincoln:
402-437-5246; Omaha 391-
3411; Omaha address: 7602
Pacific St, #205, 68114

Senator Chuck Hagel

U.S. Senate, Washington,
D.C. 20510-2705

Phone: (202) 224-4224; Fax:
(202) 224-5213

Audubon Society

Membership Application

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

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

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Email: _____

Introductory Membership

National Audubon & Local Chapter

(1st & 2nd Year \$20)

Chapter-only Membership: \$15

(No National Audubon Magazine)

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PO 3

7XCH

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U.S. House of
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DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-4155 ;
Fax: (202) 226-5452

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

Phone: (202) 225-4806; fax
(202) 225-5686

Lincoln phone: (402) 438-1598

Governor Michael Johanns

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509

Phone: (402) 471-2244; Fax:
471-6031

Mayor Mike Fahey

Omaha/Douglas Civic
Center

1819 Farnam St, Omaha NE
68183

Phone: 444-5000 Hot Line:
444-5555

Fontenelle Volunteer Honored

ASO Treasurer Patty Albright was recently recognized by Fontenelle Forest for her volunteering.

Patty serves as an education volunteer and in many other areas and programs, including Friday night astronomy programs, raptor training and special events. She is attending teacher-naturalist training to assist with additional programs.

Patty's special love may be her work with the birds

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 68103-0342

of prey. An article in Fontenelle Forest's *Leaflet* quoted her as saying, "I love working with the raptors. When you look into their eyes it's like they

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



see into your soul."

**Audubon Society of Omaha,
Mailing Address: P. O. Box
3542, Omaha 68103-0342**

**Office Building and Heron
Haven Wetland: 11809 Old
Maple Road, Omaha 68164**

**Phone: 445-4138 -
<http://audubon-omaha.org>**

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Field Trip Clem Klaphake, 707 Garden Ave, Bellevue 68005 292-2276

Finance Nelli Falzgraf, 414 Ridgewood Dr, Bellevue 68005 292-9687

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Carol Rasmussen, 4503 So. 16th St, Omaha 68107 731-3939

Historian Kathleen Rose, 123 Bellevue Blvd So, Bellevue 68005 292-8912

Building Supervisor Bechara Embaid, 3218 No 120th Ct Apt 221 Omaha 68164... 965-9598

Audubon Nebr Director Don Helmuth, 5000 Central Park Dr, Suit 101 Lincoln 402 466-1220

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