



Meadowlark

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Upcoming programs offer entertainment and education



Rivertown String Band

Pack up your blankets and/or bag chairs and join us on **Thursday, Sept. 11**, at Glacier Creek Preserve, 14810 State Street, Bennington, NE, for **“Turtles, Tortoises and Tunes on the Prairie.”** The program begins at 6 p.m. in the loft of The Barn at Glacier Creek. Naturalists Erica and Pete Jeffrey will share their expertise of both native and non-native turtles and tortoises.

Following their presentation, we will take a short stroll onto the restored tallgrass prairie where you'll get to meet and mingle with several of the turtles and tortoises the Jeffreys have rescued. Watch the sunset over the prairie and enjoy the tunes of Rivertown String Band as they entertain us with bluegrass and traditional folk music.

Free and open to the public. Registration is required at Audubon-Omaha.org.

On **Thursday, Oct. 9**, learn about the efforts to preserve Nebraska's endangered and threatened wildlife and habitat through the **Nebraska Natural Legacy Project (NNLP)**. First published in 2005, the state's wildlife action plan is updated at least every 10 years to meet funding requirements from the federal government.

Our guest speaker, Chelsea Forehead, has been one of a four-person team charged with gathering input from agencies and organizations, including Audubon Great Plains, and incorporating that input into the 2025 NNLP. Chelsea holds an MS in biology from UNO, and has experience in ecology and private land conservation across our state. She “looks forward to sharing the changes and highlights of the plan with you all!”

Join us in the private dining room at Vincenzo's restaurant, 15701 Pacific Street. Enjoy food, drinks and conversations with fellow nature-lovers during the 6 p.m. social hour, followed by the program at 7 p.m. Our programs are free and open to the public. Registration is required at Audubon-Omaha.org.

Look for birds pausing on their way south

by Conor Gearin



Lesser Yellowlegs by Mike Benkis

This fall, look for migrating birds using Nebraska as a stopover site for their migratory journeys. The ornithologist Paul A. Johnsgard called the Platte River Valley the “waistline” of the immense north-south geography of shorebird migration from the tundra to South America. Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Pectoral Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs and other shorebirds find the invertebrates they need to continue south in our mudflats and wetlands.

Think of our backyards and parks as the airport terminals (or train stations, depending on your preference) for songbirds such as Nashville Warblers, American Redstarts, Black-and-white Warblers, and more. Given some time for a layover, what do you tend to do? Find some food, fill up on water, find somewhere nice to sit and rest a bit? Birds have the same priorities when they pause a long-distance flight and “go to ground” at a stopover location for a few days. They need to refuel on food and need habitat that shelters them from predators and the elements.

Visit BirdCast.info to see bird migration forecasts for Douglas County if you're in Omaha, or for your county

(Continued on page 2)

GREEN CORNER: HOW YOU CAN HELP WILDLIFE AT HOME

Conservation begins at home; each of us can help restore our unique ecosystem.

How to keep birds in mind this autumn

Upcycle your jack-o'-lantern into a bird feeder! Push strong sticks through so that they jut out to create perches, then fill with bird seed.

For many species, fall is the perfect time to plant! Native trees and shrubs offer birds cozy shelter and cool shade year-round.

Sign up for our fall field trips!

Boyer Chute Hike

Wednesday, Sept. 24,

6 – 7:30 p.m.

The Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge was established to restore fish and wildlife habitat in and along the Missouri River. This guided hike will be approximately two miles on mowed grass with little or no elevation. Our focus will be on the Missouri River and the changing habitat that can be seen as a result of flooding and how that impacts the future of refuge management.

Participants are advised to wear long pants and closed toe shoes, and bring plenty of water to drink. Consider sunscreen and bug spray for added protection. Meet in the main parking lot. There is a pit toilet available in the parking lot.

This hike is limited to 20 participants. Please register at Audubon-Omaha.org.



Red-tailed Hawk by Sheila Glencer

HawkWatch

at Hitchcock Nature Center

Saturday, Oct. 4, 9 – 11 a.m.

Hitchcock Nature Center is located in the Loess Hills and offers nearly 1,500 acres of prairie, savannah and woodland areas to enjoy outdoor recreation. This Saturday morning program will feature an informational presentation on the HawkWatch program that was established in 1992, followed by an opportunity to go up the 50-foot tower

to look for hawks.

Participants are advised to wear comfortable footwear to climb tower stairs and to bring a jacket or sweater for cooler temperatures at the higher elevation on the tower. Meet at the main lodge where restrooms are available. Parking is free for members of Pottawattamie Conservation Foundation, or \$5 per vehicle, payable with exact change or check at the park gate. Bring your binoculars!

This program is limited to 25 participants. Please register at Audubon-Omaha.org.

Look for birds pausing on their way south

(Continued from page 1)

of choice. Just a few nights in the season have very high numbers of birds on the move. Looking back at September 2024, the biggest migration night was Sept. 17, with 7.5 million birds moving through Douglas County in just one night, compared to just a few thousand for the days leading up to that night. Going out the morning after a big migratory movement makes it very likely to have a rewarding day of birding. Big migration nights depend on several factors including weather and prevailing winds, so don't put a pin on Sept. 17, 2025, expecting the same results as last year. Have a look at BirdCast's three-day forecast when you want to go birding soon. On the other hand, if your approach is to bird a little every day, you can't really go wrong.

Keep an eye out for birds way up there in aerial habitats out of reach for us landlubbers: species such as Common Nighthawks and Purple Martins, aerial insect-eaters that migrate in large numbers through Omaha. A very large concentration of Purple Martins gathers on autumn evenings over UNMC. Around sunset, look skyward for hundreds of these birds swirling under the clouds.

Field notes from the president *by Conor Gearin*



Dear readers,

As we prepare to enjoy the spectacular show put on by birds migrating south through our area, I want to take a moment to reflect on how we can be good stewards of the habitats these incredible species travel through. Building collisions are the No. 2 cause of bird mortality due to human actions. (The No. 1 cause is predation by outdoor cats.)

Each year, up to one billion birds die in building collisions in North America. The majority are migratory birds, which can collide with glass because they do not see it as an obstacle — they perceive the reflection of trees and foliage and think they are flying to shelter, so they crash into the window at full speed. These collisions are almost always fatal. Skyscrapers, small homes, and everything in between all pose threats during bird migration.

I say this not to bring up yet another grim reality, but instead to share that solutions are attainable and near at hand, for both large buildings and small homes. For new constructions, there are windows specially designed to be more visible to birds. For existing windows, there are cost-effective solutions that avoid any need for expensive replacements, notably the Feather Friendly window decals. McCormick Convention Center in Chicago was responsible for thousands of migratory bird deaths. Last year, the center installed Feather Friendly decals. So far it has been 95% effective in reducing migratory bird mortality, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Installing bird-safe window decals or a similar solution can help protect birds, allowing more of them to survive their immense journeys south every year. Recent successes in making windows safer for birds combine new technology, practical thinking, and the can-do spirit of countless conservationists. It's one meaningful way we can all make a difference for wildlife.

Place your orders now for ASO's Fall Bird Seed Sale!

Orders are due Oct. 8

For 45 years, Audubon Society of Omaha has been selling a wide variety of high-quality bird seed and bird seed mixes in a range of sizes at reasonable prices. Your orders and donations are the main fundraisers to support our local education and conservation activities.

Our bird seed sales are offered twice a year on a pre-order basis, in September-October and January-February. Our next sale starts Tuesday, Sept. 2, and ends Wednesday, Oct. 8. Orders will be ready for pickup at our warehouse at 4339 S 90 St. on Saturday, Oct. 18

during the hours of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Sunday, Oct. 19 from noon to 3 p.m.

In early September, ASO will mail an order form to all members and past customers for the fall sale. You can place your order by mail (please allow one week), OR, you can order and pay by credit card on ASO's website, Audubon-Omaha.org. If you are new to birding or want some expert advice, there are articles from National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology with ideas for attracting and feeding birds on ASO's website under the Fall Bird Seed Sale tab.

If you have friends or neighbors who would like to be added to the mailing list, contact John and Betty Fullerton at 402-493-4362(h) or 402-957-5901(c) or birdseedsale@audubonomaha.org with their names and addresses. You could also send them a link to the birdseed sale page on our website.

Volunteers are needed

Join our crew of amiable volunteers helping to fill orders and lift and load bags of bird seed during the fall seed sale on Saturday, Oct. 18, and Sunday, Oct. 19. Please contact John Fullerton at 402-957-5901, Sarah Shepherd at 402-445-4138 or email birdseedsale@audubonomaha.org if you are able to help with this major fundraiser.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS

Cardinal Mixture

Millet base with added milo, cracked corn, peanut chips and 20% sunflower by volume.

Des Moines Standard Mixture

Higher quality basic mix with millet base, cracked corn, oat groats, peanut pieces and 40% sunflower seeds by volume. No milo.

Des Moines Classic Mixture

Basic ingredients same as Des Moines Standard, except sunflower is a 50/50 mix of seeds and hearts and it also contains safflower. Attracts the widest variety of seed-eating birds.

Des Moines Deluxe Mixture

Same as Des Moines Classic, except that it contains more peanuts and hulled sunflower hearts.

Des Moines Regal Mixture

A premium blend of sunflower hearts, shelled peanuts (50%), safflower seed, raisins and a protein-vitamin supplement.

Sunflower Seed, Black Oil

Smaller, more nutritious seeds preferred by most winter birds.



Downy Woodpecker by Molly Beck

Sunflower Hearts

Fine hearts are finely ground seeds suitable for mixing with nyjer in a thistle feeder, if desired. Medium hearts average about 1/3 the size of whole hearts. Coarse hearts are larger pieces.

Nyjer

Loved by finches.

Nyjer & Fine Hearts

Blended at 50/50 ratio for easy flow through finch feeders. Both seed types are re-cleaned by Des Moines Feed before packaging to enhance the mix's appeal to finches, chickadees & nuthatches.

Rich & Tweet

Nutritious, no-mess mixture with dried raisins and cherries. Contains 50% peanut hearts and pieces. It is designed to attract fruit-eaters such as robins, thrushes and other ground feeders.

Woodpecker Gourmet

A blend that is full of nuts. Contains almonds, other tree nuts, pumpkinseeds and raisins.

Bushy Tail Treat

A mix of peanuts, sunflower, whole corn, raisins, pumpkin seed and feed pellets that will tempt any squirrel's palate!

Peanut Treat Suet

A mix of rendered beef suet and roasted, chopped peanuts for woodpeckers, nuthatches and chickadees.

Cracked Corn and Ear Corn

Peanuts

In the Shell and Without Shells

Safflower

Nutrasaff

Hulled safflower seed. Higher in protein and oil with less mess.

Thank you — From the Bird Seed Sale Committee and all of us at Audubon Society of Omaha!

An actor shares her personal journey into the world of birds

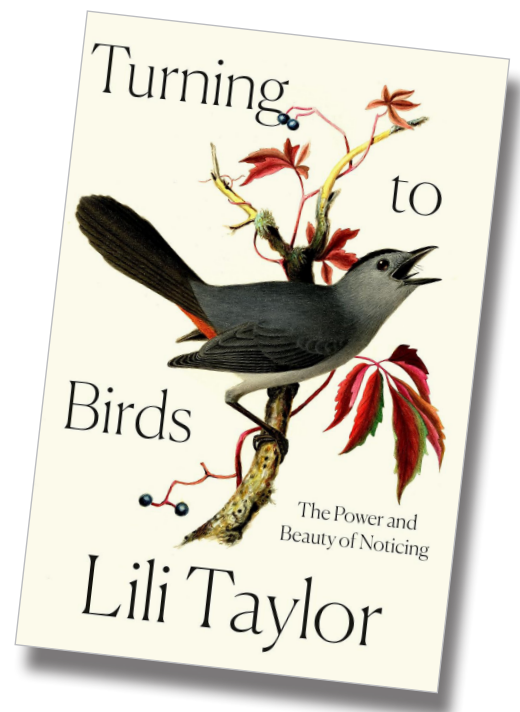
Book review by Bill Bossman

Many people with a passion for birds can point to a specific event or series of circumstances that kindled that passion within them. In *Turning to Birds: The Power and Beauty of Noticing* (Crown Publishing Group, 2025), author Lili Taylor takes us with her on a personal journey as she enters the world of birds. Through 13 essays, she shares her encounters with members of the avian world. We meet pigeons and House Sparrows on urban streets, Gray Catbirds in a city park in Manhattan, Gambel's Quail in New Mexico, Sandhill Cranes in the Platte River Valley of Nebraska, and Eastern Bluebirds in upstate New York.

The author is an actor who has appeared in movies, on television, and on stage for nearly four decades. *Mystic Pizza, Say Anything, Dog Fight,*

and *Rudy* are some of her many movie credits. Her artistic eye and actor's gift for storytelling draw the reader into her life and into the lives of the birds she observes. That ability is most evident as she relates the story of an experience in Ohio when an American Woodcock landed on her chest: "My world narrowed and widened simultaneously, as if I had entered a new dimension but in a sacred bubble made up of me and this living, breathing, feathery entity."

If you are brand new to this world of birding, Taylor will open your eyes to what birds can teach us about the natural world around us. If you have been immersed in the world of birds for many years or decades, you will be reminded of a time when the world narrowed and all that mattered was that splendid, feathered creature before you with



whom you shared a brief moment in time and space. For all of us, Lili Taylor provides inspiration for getting out into the world to see birds, and to do what we can to protect those little creatures who inspire us and bring us joy.

Providing habitat for birds at home

By Roger Carroll, ASO Habitat Committee Chair



Clearwing Moth by Ron Hiett

Native plants provide munchable habitat for native insect caterpillars. Native insects depend on native plants for food and cannot grow without them. Without the insects we will have no birds. Most birds – including some hawks – feed insects to their young nestlings.

Consider, in place of chemical treatment for your property, something called "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM), which emphasizes prevention and distinguishing benign species from

harmful ones. Hold off on putting herbicide, fungicide, and pesticide down indiscriminately. Pesticide will affect the insects, worms, and beetles birds eat. It will become concentrated in birds and harm their health.

Insects require native plants — think of the Monarch and milkweed relationship. The young caterpillar instars of insects have become adapted to specific plants. ("Instars" are the stages insect larva go through as they grow into maturity.) The milkweed sap is toxic to most insects, but Monarch caterpillar instars have evolved over time to require that specific plant.

Do set some area aside in your space for native plants. If you look for plants that butterflies depend on in their migration, you may be surprised, as I have been, at what chooses to fly through your airspace.

Buy a pack of native plant seed of



Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Ron Hiett

your choice now. In the fall, place on a cleared soil. Cover lightly with hay or mulch. Check to see what sprouts up in the spring.

Bird habitat can exist in urban areas. People often first think of bird feeders. Birds will eat at feeders, but do not require them. Instead, think trees, think shrubbery, think fruit. Do provide shelter, brush, and trees next to feeders. Birds need water – clean, fresh, moving water every day.

Still, birds will come to feeders for a snack. Buy your sunflower seeds and other seeds from Audubon Society of Omaha bird seed fundraisers in fall and winter.

The eyes have it — your photos

*Send in your bird photos
to [audubonomaha@
audubonomaha.org](mailto:audubonomaha@audubonomaha.org)!*

Right: Great Horned
Owls by Mike Judkins



Nebraska legislative update

by Mark Harberg

The next session of the Nebraska Legislature begins in January 2026. The following bills and resolutions received final approval in this year's session:

LR158 will conduct an interim study to determine the feasibility of the State of Nebraska assuming the administration of the designated Wild and Scenic River stretch of the Niobrara River from Valentine to Newport, Nebraska. Input regarding what should be included in the study can be provided to Mr. Tom Brandt, Chairperson of the Natural Resources Committee of the Nebraska legislature. A public hearing will be scheduled for September 2025.

LB36 (Omnibus Bill) includes a provision that creates the Safe Battery Collection and Recycling Act, which requires Battery Stewardship Organizations to provide for the collection of all covered batteries on a free, continuous, convenient, visible, and accessible basis. Covered batteries are portable and medium format batteries such as those used in power tools. **LB36** includes provisions of **LB344** to modify groundwater allocations for municipalities in fully or over-appropriated areas. Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, any new or expanded commercial or industrial user served by a municipal water source that uses more than 25 million gallons of water annually is subject to the controls of an integrated management plan, rule, or order and is required to provide a mitigation report to the applicable natural resources district.

LB36 also includes amended provisions of **LB590** authorizing the state Department of Transportation to establish a mitigation bank or in-lieu-fee program to offset the environmental effects of transportation projects, including impacts to threatened or endangered species. The measure requires any state agency or other entity that owns a mitigation bank to pay a sum in lieu of ad valorem taxes lost by the county.

LB260 reappropriates funds, including cutting the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's General Fund (used for administration and operation) budget by \$5M.

LB317 merged the Department of Natural Resources with the Department of Environment and Energy to form the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment. The director of the Department of Environment and Energy would lead the new agency. The Department of Natural Resources director would become the Chief Water Officer, who would head the new Division of Water and report directly to the DWEE director. An amendment to the original proposal will ensure the merger does not affect a 1923 interstate compact. In 2022, the Legislature authorized the Department of Natural Resources to build the Perkins County Canal Project to divert South Platte River water from Colorado to Nebraska under the terms of the 1923 compact.

Resources & Info

How to join/renew/update

Join or renew your membership online at Audubon-Omaha.org and select "Get Involved." Save paper and avoid confusion. Your membership with National Audubon automatically makes you a member of Audubon Society of Omaha.

Change of address?

Please call National Audubon toll-free at 1-844-428-3826, or send an email to audubon@emailcustomerservice.com

Stay Connected

Join our email list at Audubon-Omaha.org under "Get Involved."

Bequests & gifts

A bequest to Audubon Society of Omaha is a gift to those who will succeed us and secure our natural heritage. Want to honor a loved one and help ASO's local conservation and education efforts? You can make a donation anytime at audubon-omaha.org OR you can mail your check along with the name and address of the person to be notified to:

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

We want you – to volunteer

Have you ever been told you're a leader? Or do you want to be a leader? How about leading a birding field trip to the destination of your choice? Please contact Sarah Shepherd at sshepherd@audubonomaha.org and let us know you're interested in getting involved with your local Audubon chapter.

Take action

Big things are happening, so communicate with your elected officials. Go to Audubon-Omaha.org for links to contact info.

Injured bird?

Raptors: Call 866-888-7261 to speak to a Raptor Conservation Alliance volunteer. Non-raptor: Call Nebraska Wildlife Rehab at 402-234-2473.

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STEWARDSHIP OF THE EARTH AND ITS CREATURES

the Meadowlark

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*Photo: Short-eared Owl
by Haley McTee*

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.

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