
The Meadowlark

November 2008

Volume 37 Issue 9

ASO is a Chapter

*of the National Audubon
Society*

*Serving Eastern Nebraska
and Western Iowa*

Birding at Panama's Canopy Tower

By Loren & Babs Padelford

Loren and Babs Padelford will share photos from their recent stay at the Canopy Tower in Panama at our November general meeting.

The meeting will take place on Thursday, November 13, at 7:30 p.m. at the Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances Street (1 block south of 45th & Center).

The program will feature a photographic sampler of the flora and fauna of the tropical rainforest around Panama's Canopy Tower located in Soberania National Park, about 45 minutes from Panama City. Babs and Loren traveled there in April of 2008.

The Canopy Tower was built on Semaphore Hill in 1965 by the U.S. Air Force as a radar tower. It is believed that at one time it was used to track drug runners flying from Columbia.

In 1997, a Panama banker, Raul Arias de Para, bought the Tower with the purpose of converting it into a birding ecolodge. He became interested in birds after attending a bird course taught by Panama Audubon Society.

Announcing Christmas Bird Counts

The date for the DeSoto/Boyer Chute Christmas Bird Count has been set for Saturday, December 27. The Omaha area Christmas Count will be held Saturday, December 20.

These are enjoyable outings, a chance to socialize with other birders. They are also opportunities to help track our resident birds in winter.

More information will be forthcoming in the December issue of the *Meadowlark*.

The Tower was opened for birders in 1998 and has attracted visitors from around the world. The 48,000-acre Soberania National Park borders much of the eastern bank of the Panama Canal and includes the world-famous Pipeline Road. The Panama Audubon Society counted 385 species of birds on Pipeline Road in a 24-hour period.

Join us November 13 for the program, followed by a brief business meeting, concluding with a social hour, coffee and cookies. Visitors are welcome.

Long-tailed Hermit

Field Trip to Squaw Creek NWR November 22

On Saturday, November 22, we will travel to the Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge near Mound City, MO, meeting there at 8:00 A.M. CST (by then the clocks will have changed). We'll meet at 6:00 A.M. at the south end of the Southroads Mall in Bellevue for carpooling. The trip leader is Elliott Bedows.

This will likely be an all-day event with birding at various locales on the way back. Bring snacks, a lunch and something hot to drink. It could be quite cold, so dress accordingly, giving special attention to warm headwear and footwear. Bring snacks and a lunch if you wish and something hot to drink. We will likely coordinate this trip with the Fontenelle Bird Club. The rain date for this trip is Sunday, November 23.

Where to Bird and What to See

Do you remember when "birding" was known as "bird watching"? If you do, then you probably also remember the amount of time that was needed to plan for a bird outing to another state or region of the country (phone calls, letter or note writing, trying to find a field guide or description of the area you wanted to visit, where to stay....)

Today it is so simple and easy with all of the birding websites available to give you detailed descriptions of what species you might find and exactly where. These sites can vary from covering a small area to some that cover birding trails several hundred miles in distance. They almost always include other information such as eating places, lodging and other potential points of interest. The following are some varied examples that can be useful to birders.

.. <http://www.nebraskabirdingtrails.com> - This is a site that covers the entire state of Nebraska and includes some 300 public birding sites as well as a number of private locations (farms, ranches, outfitters, and agri-tourism participants). Most of the sites give target species, size of the site or location, whether permission is needed to enter, contact information, and habitat found in each one. Most of the accompanying photos are from Nebraska photographers.

.. <http://www.nebraskametrobirding.com/> - As the website address indicates, this site focuses on the Omaha and Lincoln metro areas. This is a new site just completed in September 2008. It is primarily aimed at newcomers to the metro areas, vacationers passing through, but particularly conference and convention goers who have a short time available to bird in an afternoon or morning. It also can be helpful to interested birders from central and western Nebraska. Photos on this website are provided by local photographers.

.. <http://www.chickendancetrail.com> - As a regional site, the focus is on birding locations in southwestern and south central Nebraska. This is an area

By Clem Klaphake
where millions of birds migrate through every fall and spring - especially good for waterfowl, shorebirds, and Sandhill Cranes. As the website name indicates, Prairie Chickens can be seen at numerous sites throughout this area. The habitat here covers sandsage prairies and large reservoirs, loess canyons, the Republican River valley, and the Western Rainwater Basin.

.. <http://kansasbirdingtrails.com> - This website divides Kansas into 4 birding areas from east to west. For example, the Central Wetlands and Prairie region includes the well-known areas of Cheyenne Bottoms, Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, the Smoky Hills, and Post Rock Country. The former two locations are internationally recognized shorebird and waterfowl bird conservation areas. One other region is the Tallgrass Prairie, which includes Konza Prairie and the Flint Hills. A number of local birders regularly bird these locations in Kansas.

.. <http://www.mnbirdtrail.com/hotspots.htm> - One of several Minnesota birding websites that is 200 miles long in the northwestern part of the state and has 45 sites where 275-plus bird species have been seen. It starts in west central Minnesota and ends up near the Canadian border.

.. <http://www.birdingtrail.org/>

[RegionsandLoopsOverview.htm](#) - A different type of birding trail covering southern Minnesota from the South Dakota border east to the Wisconsin border. It is made up of a series of loops (17) that can be birded independently from the entire distance of the trail.

..

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildlife_trails/coastal/ - The first birding trail and one of the most used. It covers the Texas coast from Louisiana through the central area of Corpus Christ south to the Rio Grande in the Brownsville area. It is a very well-developed (Texas as \$) site with great graphics and

Cont. on page 3

Spring Creek Prairie

Field Trip List

By Elliott Bedows

Thank You, L'Evento Caffe

Audubon thanks Adrian Suarez of [L'Evento Caffe](#) for donating coffee and cups for our general meetings.

ASO's annual trip to Spring Creek Prairie (SCP) was held Saturday, October 18. Here is the tally. The total list of participants were as follows: I, Clem Klaphake, Bob Fuchs and Kevin Poague.

The day started as if it would be a total disaster with visibility limited to less than 500 meters at 8:00 a.m. And it was COLD. But as the winds picked up (which actually made it colder), so did the visibility and the birding. Listed below is a summary of the birds seen on a day that ended as one of the most beautiful fall days I've ever seen. At Spring Creek Prairie we were at one of the most awesome, scenic spots in the state. Seen were 42 species total.

Sparrows -
16 species

Eastern
Towhee - 3

Clay-
colored
Sparrow - 1

Field
Sparrow - 1

The coffee, much enjoyed, is shade-grown, and the cups, made from renewable resources and lined with NatureWorks Polymer, are compostible.

To properly thank Mr. Suarez for his generosity and environmentally sound products, we recommend that you stop by one of his shops to enjoy the coffee and foods.

The menu includes lunch items, breakfast and dessert pastries, and the fine coffee.

L'Evento Caffè Locations

1110 So. 71st Street

158th & Maple

129th & Giles Road

172nd & Center

142nd & Q

84th & Grant (Old Downtown
Papillion)

**Where to *Cont. from page 2*
Bird,**

maps to print or order. A must-see if for no other reason than to see what a great birding website might look like.

There are hundreds of other birding trails and websites throughout the United States that I would recommend birders access and learn about while sitting at home and not spending a dime doing it (except the power to your computer). Some are more user-friendly than others, some have checklists and maps available, some update sightings and allow birders to report their sightings and give testimonials.

Check some out if you haven't already done so. And of course, there are always new ones popping up and others being changed.

Vesper
Sparrow - 3

LeConte's
Sparrow -
50+

Nelson's
Sharp-tailed
- 1

Grasshopper
Sparrow - 1-
2

Fox
Sparrow - 3

Song
Sparrow -
20+

Lincoln's
Sparrow
20+

Swamp
Sparrow
20+

White-
throated
Sparrow -
3+

Harris'
Sparrow -
20+

White-
crowned
Sparrow -
3+

Dark-eyed
Junco - 2

Smith's
Longspur -
2

Other
significant
findings:

Brewer's
Blackbird -
1

Pied-billed
Grebe - 3

Double-
crested
Cormorant -
3

sub-ad]
Bald Eagle
sub-adult - 1

Sharp-
shinned
Hawk - 1

Prairie
Chicken - 5

Orange-
crowned
Warbler - 1

Yellow-



Eastern Towhee
Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The information submitted is valuable and helps maintain the world's largest database on feeder-bird numbers. There are also benefits to participants. "Nature is not merely a resource to be exploited. It is a system that sustains us. All ages and skill levels are welcome. To sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at 800-843-2473. For the \$15 fee, participants receive the *FeederWatcher's* I

Project FeederWatch will begin on Saturday, November 8, when birding citizens can help scientists learn about our winter bird populations and distributions. The Project runs through February 28. The plan is to fill your feeders and count the numbers and kinds of birds visiting them each week, then send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The information submitted is valuable and helps maintain the world's largest database on feeder-bird numbers. There are also benefits to participants. "Nature is not merely a resource to be exploited. It is a system that sustains us. All ages and skill levels are welcome. To sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at 800-843-2473. For the \$15 fee, participants receive the *FeederWatcher's* I

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involves the fate of the Sage Grouse in Wyoming. There has been overwhelming oil and gas development on western lands, which

Sometimes it seems that the needs of birds and wildlife always lose out to industry, road building and development. It is encourag

By Bob Fuchs, Conservation Chair

This is my first try at a brief column for the *Meadowlark*, focusing on conservation issues that should interest those individuals who like birds. Former presidents of ASO and conservation chairs have served this purpose well in the past. My role here is to pass on news of national and, I hope, local interest regarding our environment. If anyone knows of a state or local issue that needs to be reported here, please email me at rfuchs@cox.net.

In my opinion, it is difficult to be interested in birds and birding and not be interested in protecting our environment that nurtures birds, humans, and all other animal and plant species. Because the presidential election is coming up shortly, we need to be thinking about how environmental issues will be affected by the outcomes.

Our own National Audubon Society is a good place to start. The August issue of *Audubon Magazine* presents the results of questions directed to John McCain and Barack Obama at the end of the primary season. Here is the link to that article:
www.audubonmagazine.org/features0809/politics.html.

One organization the *Audubon Magazine* article mentions is the League of Conservation Voters. This is a nonpartisan organization that attempts to keep track of voting records of U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate members on selected major environmental legislation that has come up for votes. One is able to search these records by state and find the explanations of the issues as well.

The 2008 National Environmental Scorecard is now available at <http://www.lcv.org/scorecard/>. It includes 2007 results and lifetime voting record scores as well. Although non-artisan, the League of Conservation Voters has endorsed a presidential candidate, which you will see if you go to its home page. ASO and the National Audubon Society are not officially endorsing any candidates.

Mexican classification (yet to be published) lists 11 species as endangered, 5 as threatened, 4 as requiring special protection, and two as unclassified.

"In 2007, only six species of parrots in Mexico were listed as endangered. This new classification almost doubles that number," said Juan Carlos Cantu Guzman, Director of Mexican Programs for Defenders of Wildlife. "It is readily apparent that unless we immediately halt the capture and trade in all parrots and macaws, we could lose these species entirely. This bill signifies a milestone through which we can finally address conservation and recovery of these unique birds."

Although this bill marks an immense victory for parrot conservation, much work is yet to be done. "Defenders of Wildlife and Teyeliz will inform people of the new capture ban and will seek their support to stop buying wild parrots. If wild parrots are to survive, people must stop buying them for pets," noted Maria Elena Sanchez Saldana of Teyeliz, A.C. Defenders of Wildlife and Teyeliz, A.C. are already working on a binational education campaign with the U.S. and Mexico, and will continue to address the need to find adequate funding to solve the biological, economic and social challenges of the illegal parrot trade.

*Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With more than one million members and activists, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come.

For more information, [visit www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)

Cont.

Finally, Grist.org is a great website if you want to keep up on all the latest environmental news. You can even get daily news sent to your email address if you wish. It is not all serious stuff; the Grist motto is "Doom and Gloom With a Sense of Humor." Grist also has a chart where you can compare how the presidential candidates stand on environmental issues:
http://www.grist.org/candidate_chart_08.html

Cont.

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Cont. next column

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When sending your gift, please identify the person
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A bequest to Audubon is a gift to those who will
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If you find an
injured bird of
prey, please
contact a Raptor
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