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ASO is a Chapter

*of the National
Audubon Society*

*Serving Eastern
Nebraska*

and Western Iowa

Citizen Scientists

By Nancy Leonard

Do you ever wish that instead of getting a useful degree in business administration or elementary education, you had taken a risk and become a paleontologist, an ichthyologist, or perhaps a historian of church architecture? I know I do! In fact I think all of us have dreams or interests that we just couldn't figure out how to work into our lives. And at this point in my life, I know I will not go back to school to become an archaeologist or a climatologist.

Fortunately, there is an organization that offers opportunities to work with scientists doing real, important research.

That organization is Earthwatch Institute, and their motto is "Where do you want to go to make a difference?" Founded in 1971, Earthwatch supports scientific field research by recruiting approximately 4,000 volunteers each year who work under supervising scientists, collecting data in fields as diverse as marine biology, archaeology, climatology, rainforest ecology and many

more. Volunteers pay a fee to participate and join research teams working in a location and with a subject matter of their choice. Currently there are more than 120 different expeditions being offered.

Audubon members Dennis and Karlene Kingery have participated in four Earthwatch expeditions over the years — in Mallorca, Hungary, Romania and Britain. On January 10 they will share their adventures with you and tell you more about the fascinating organization.

Please join us at **7:30 p.m. Thursday, January 10**, to learn more about Earthwatch working vacations. As usual we will meet at the **Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St (one block south of Center at 44th St)**. The talk will be followed by a short business meeting and social hour. Visitors are always welcome.

Come, expand your possibilities and decide "where you want to go to make a difference."

Also at the meeting — bargain prices: markdowns on caps, polo shirts, long-

Field Trip - Journeying to Joslyn for Wildlife Art

You are invited to join us indoors for our January field trip Saturday, January 19, when we'll be looking for birds in art rather than birds in the woods.

Our trip will be a guided tour of "**The Art of Robert Bateman**," currently on exhibit at the Joslyn Art Museum. A Canadian artist, Bateman is renowned for his realistic paintings of wild creatures. He has earned worldwide recognition as an important influence on wildlife art. He is also known for his landscapes, seascapes, still lives, humans and portraiture. His work encompasses several media, including printmaking, sculpture, and jewelry.

A companion exhibition, "**Karl Bodmer's Animals**," will be another attraction of the tour.. These paintings are

known for the fine detail of the animals depicted. Bodmer is more famous for his works created while accompanying Prince Maximilian on his North American expedition. Bodmer's landscapes of unspoiled regions and paintings of Native Americans are his familiar subjects.

ASO has arranged for a group tour on Saturday, January 19, at 1:00 p.m.

You need to make a reservation by calling Laurine at 451-3647. Deadline is January 14, but earlier notification would be appreciated. Attendance for Joslyn members is free. The cost for nonmembers is \$5.50; \$4.00 for seniors (62+).

Food As We Like It - Flavorful, Healthful, Locally Grown

By Kathy Schwery

Why is the aroma of freshly baked bread emanating from our kitchen on a regular basis? Why am I online looking up the location of the nearest farmers' markets? And why I am searching our neighborhood for a suitable place to plant a garden this spring?

The answer to all three questions is the same. I just finished reading *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver, and the book has changed forever the way I will think about food.

iceberg lettuce tastes bad because it has been genetically modified to survive a several-hundred-mile truck trip in a cooler. Turkeys are genetically modified to produce an overabundance of white meat, but these changes have bred the good taste out of turkey.

As consumers, we face a myriad of choices each day, and probably nowhere are there more choices than in the grocery store. In their book the Kingsolvers suggest that we need to think about whether we really want to

Written in an entertaining, easy-to-read style, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* details a year in the life of the author and her family, a year in which they decided to buy "only food raised in their own neighborhood, grow it themselves or do without it." Concern about what is in the food we eat, as well as concern over the unsustainable costs for transportation of that food and depletion of our water resources to grow it led the Kingsolver family to move from Tucson back to a small farm in southern Appalachia. But it wasn't only the desire to stop contributing to the industrial food pipeline that led the Kingsolvers to make this radical change. They were motivated also by the desire to eat healthy food, food that actually tasted good, using meat and produce they knew the origins of. The Kingsolver family grew their own vegetables, had a small orchard, and raised turkeys and chickens.

A particular food is the subject of each chapter of *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, whether it be the first asparagus of spring or fresh tomatoes in August. Each chapter also contains a sidebar written by the author's husband, a professor at Emory University. His contributions cover topics such as overuse of pesticides by industrial agriculture, confined animals feedlots, availability of farmers' markets, and the obesity epidemic.

There is much to be learned from this book. The authors explain why high fructose corn syrup, which contributes to this nation's obesity problem, is in so many of the foods we eat, and why high pesticide use only leads to even more pesticide use as the insects become resistant to ever more toxic chemicals.

According to the Kingsolvers, large corporations such as Monsanto are buying up all of the varieties of seeds, leaving only the one or two genetically modified kinds they produce. The same thing is happening with breeds of turkeys and even with our fruit varieties. Watery

eat apples grown in New Zealand or whether we should make the better choice for our planet and eat those grown nearby.

The authors tell us that if each American ate one meal a week that was composed of organic or locally grown foods, our nation would reduce its oil consumption by 1.1 million barrels a week!

The authors make us think about whether we want to eat produce that has lost its flavor and nutrition because of transport and storage. They explain that most food items have traveled an average of 1500 miles before we purchase them.

A recent New York Times op-ed piece has a different take on the "buying local" concept. Author Sarah Murray discusses the carbon emissions caused by food production without getting into the argument that foods purchased locally are more nutritious and taste better. She suggests that consumers might sometimes do well to choose food products from far away because methods used to raise those foods are more environmentally sustainable. She states that energy used to transport food is only one part of the carbon emissions generated by food production, and some types of transportation are more energy efficient than others. Murray then writes that without mass production of food, the world's people could not be fed. But she thinks big food companies should be urged to "find safer, healthier and more environmentally sustainable methods of supplying our dinner tables."

As Kingsolver suggested, we do need to start thinking about the carbon "footprint" of our food. She makes a strong case that to improve the health of our planet and allow us to eat foods that taste good and are more nutritious, the best choice is to grow things ourselves or whenever we can, purchase items that are locally grown.

Warmer Weather, Hunters and Others

By Laurine Blankenau

Birders are noticing it—a change in the movement of species that is alarming for what it signifies.

Hunters are noticing alterations in the Mississippi Flyway migratory patterns. In *Midwest Duck Blinds, Visions of Global Warmin* (New York Times December 11), William Yardley writes, "As hunters point their shotguns toward the sky and fire, a question echoes in the spent powder: what is up with the ducks?"

What is up is temperatures that delay the freezing of water which compels waterfowl to migrate, thus delaying the start of hunting. The warmer weather then finds the birds hanging around longer.

The trend has been noticeable since the late 90's, and is lasting too long for one of the five-to-seven year cycles that have typically occurred. The record shows that average temperatures have risen about two degrees over the high around 1930, Yardley reports.

Predictably, some disagree about a connection between climate change and global warming. And there is some hope that wildlife will adapt, abandoning some paths and discovering others. A question is whether wildlife can adapt to global warming quickly enough to maintain populations.

Virginia Burkett, chief scientist for global change research at the U.S. Geological Survey and sharer of the Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore, reports on changes in species other than waterfowl. Butterflies, songbirds, frogs and foxes are exhibiting different breeding and migration patterns, with earlier nesting for as many as two dozen

National Audubon Regional Representative

By Laurine Blankenau

It is time (past time) to introduce ASO members to our representative on the National Audubon Society Board of Directors.

Peter Cannon, shown left, of the Madison, Wisconsin, Audubon chapter, was elected last year for our Central Region. (Last year Wisconsin and Minnesota - formerly of the Great Lakes Region - were added to the Central Region.)

Cannon provided us with some biographical information. He has served on the board of the Madison Audubon Society since 1988, is currently their program chair, and participates in the Wisconsin Audubon Council.

He serves as Secretary of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, which advocates campaign finance reform, among other governmental issues.

He was a senior legislative analyst with the nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau for 26 years before retiring in early 2005. He has published bulletins on topics including capital punishment and drug testing.

He has a Master's Degree in American History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has taught part-time in the University of Wisconsin Center System.

In his fall report to the chapters, Cannon mentions the existence of Audubon International. This organization, which has no affiliation with the National Audubon Society, is certifying golf courses as meeting environmental standards. AI also seems to be offering something like their golf certification for other products. Not surprisingly, this has

species of birds. Three warbler species are predicted to move out of the United States.

While birders and hunters have to adjust to new movements of wildlife, a more complicated adjustment is needed for wildlife management. How to accommodate not only hunters but wildlife as well, with management practices suitable for maintaining habitat and populations? What spending should be devoted to feeding and breeding habitat that seems to be on the downslope? Where to direct funding for the sites wildlife is apparently choosing? Do new bag limits need to be imposed?

In short, former and present conservation tactics may have to be abandoned or revised.

Ms. Burkett predicted that while loss of habitat has reduced wildlife numbers, climate will have a greater effect on loss of wildlife in future decades

some people confused.

If you know people who are confusing Audubon International with Audubon, Cannon wishes to be notified. Email him at apcannon@gmail.com or feel free to call him at 608-251-1276. He will be happy to talk with you or return your call.

He also offers our chapter any assistance he might be able to give.

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Addresses to Remember

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The White House, 1600
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Washington D.C. 20500-0001

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

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

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