
ASO Garden Walk

A garden walk will be held Sunday, July 13 (rain date July 27) from noon until 5:00 p.m, featuring a variety of garden types created by the owners with loving care. By Jackie Scholar

Seven gardens, using native and wildlife-supporting plantings and others, will be on view. Five of the gardens are located in Omaha and two in Bellevue.

Donations for the walk are \$6.00. You may start at any of the locations. Maps and brochures will be available at each site.

Bob & Elaine Sabin: 1240 St. Andrews Rd, Bellevue. The Sabin garden, called "Wildhaven," has been registered since 1987 as Habitat #5000 in the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Habitat Program. It features outdoor rooms, a colonial herb garden, a birdwatching tower, a gazebo, small forest, and no grass. Most of the plants and trees are native to Nebraska.

Rollin & Sue Gentes: 523 N. Bellevue Boulevard. This large, shady yard features beds with many varieties of hostas and other shade-loving plants. Perennial beds balance ornamental and native wildflowers, with very little grass.

Sharon Conlon & Jack Heidel: 5010 Nicholas St, Omaha. When they moved here in 1994, Sharon & Jack



found grass and a lone pear tree. They have created a country cottage garden, adding a lattice and pergola. The raised beds containing many ornamental plants were made from compost Jack prepares.

Eric & Jackie Scholar: 5012 Nicholas St, Omaha. This Dundee garden has a secluded look, featuring plants to draw butterflies and birds, and a vegetable and herb garden, all in close proximity. Many of the plants are tall native prairie varieties Eric has collected—some of which are not commonly found in gardens.

Sandy & Bill Seibert: 2115 So. 114th St, Omaha. Designed to attract wildlife, this gently sloping garden provides food, water, and shelter throughout the year.

Following the flagstone paths, you will see a variety of trees, flowers and grasses, many berry-producing shrubs, a pond, bird feeders and nesting boxes.

Glenn Pollock: 6736 Laurel Ave, Omaha. Glenn, our ASO prairie steward and manager, has worked over the past 15 years to create an example of a tallgrass prairie such as existed in this area pre-settlement. Most of the plants were grown from seed. It should be in its glory in early July with Turks Cap Lilies and Compass in bloom.

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ASO Picnic Sat, July 19

"Important Bird Areas" Program Thursday, August 7

At a special program Thursday, August 7, at Our annual summer pot luck picnic is Camp Brewster, 1313 Bellevue Boulevard, 7:00 scheduled for Saturday, July 19, at the ASO P.M, we will have an opportunity to learn about a office building, Heron Haven. Please bring vital bird conservation initiative new to our area. one dish of your choice, plus a serving piece Ric Zarwell, Audubon's if needed. Beverages, plates, cups, plastic utensils and napkins will be provided.

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Meet us at 6:00 p.m. for dinner. If you wish, take a stroll through the wetland afterward (with repellent).

Dave Sands

It was with surprise and sadness that we received news of Dave Sands' departure from the position of Executive Director of Audubon Nebraska. Dave is an outstanding leader and has provided positive support of our chapter's concerns. His successful actions to preserve the Niobrara, Platte, and Missouri River ecosystems in Nebraska are excellent examples of environmental stewardship.

Under his leadership, in 1998 the state organization acquired the 610-acre O'Brien ranch, renamed Audubon Spring Creek Prairie; established educational programs; and managed the prairie, wetland, and woodland habitats to conserve diversity of endemic species. Dave Sands' commitment is an inspiration to all. We'll miss him greatly.

Thank You

Our focus for years has been learning about and protecting birds, other wildlife, and natural habitats and getting the word out to involve our members and the public. With your efforts, enduring programs and projects continue to succeed. While some activities are in the spotlight, many that keep the chapter running are seldom visible. All are important and greatly appreciated.

Some weaknesses voiced at Strategic Planning last February were discussed in the May *Meadowlark*. The two issues about which most concern was expressed, and shouldn't be ignored were lack of fundraising and too much control by a few persons. In spite of the latter, ASO has remained active because of many independent, strong persons, each contributing their talents either in the forefront and behind the scenes.

We have been fortunate so far and commend the members who've stepped

cause most of us volunteer from our homes, please call us there to share your views, time, and talents.

Some new projects of Eric's presidency include scholarships for presidency include scholarships for environmental science students, burns and seed collection at our Prairie, bylaw revisions, full-color ASO brochure, a new logo, and a committee to oversee the building and wetland. In May a cleanup and barbecue event was held, and the July 13 Garden Walk to native plantings and wildlife-friendly back yards will take place. I hope to continue the direction of my predecessor to promote present activities and encourage new ones.

About Me

To introduce myself to those I haven't met, my fascination with the interconnectedness of nature started with family fishing trips and finding what the tides washed ashore in San Francisco. Yes, there are wild niches in a city of highrises. Later I earned a Biology degree and worked for the Forest Service and Department of Agriculture.

My husband, Randy, served the U.S. Air Force in meteorology and upper atmospheric physics. While in Okinawa, we were blessed with a baby daughter. In the Viet Nam days, the USAF moved us around frequently, but eventually, in 1983, Bellevue was our choice to put down roots.

I dropped into birding by way of gardening, watching goldfinches when lemon balm and oregano were left to seed, and finding Brown Thrashers when buggy volunteer bushes produced berries. I began volunteering at Fontenelle Forest with school groups and fundraising. Craig Hensley and Ruth Green introduced me to ASO. I then

forward and kept the chapter viable for years. I want to thank Past President Eric Scholar and other valuable volunteers for serving ASO admirably.

A New Crew for ASO Activities

Welcome to a new fiscal year. We're shifting to a new crew and look forward to meeting more of our members. Please come to enjoy the programs and meetings, outdoor trips and projects, and special events.

Activities are described in the *Meadowlark*, and board members' phone numbers appear on the back page. Be

mapped the Kestrel nest box route for our chapter. In short, I had an interest in the natural world: isn't that why we all joined Audubon?

In keeping with our purposes, I hope you will all take time to enjoy the great outdoors and connect with nature, whether in a garden, at recreation, or during summer trips.

And I hope those of you with the time will consider volunteering for ASO. We depend on you and value your services. Please join us to make a difference.

Important Bird Areas, Continued from page 1

Important Bird Area Coordinator for Iowa, will inform us about the Program and about some early efforts in the Loess Hills and other areas near Omaha.

The Audubon Important Bird Area Program is a means of linking the most essential bird habitats in Iowa (and soon those in Nebraska) into a global network of habitats allowing migratory species to survive.

For the first time, this network will arrange for prioritization of scarce funding, staffing and conservation projects among nations across the western hemisphere and the globe. Migratory birds require widespread human collaboration to survive their travels on a human-dominated planet.

Sharp population declines are the often-mentioned habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and habitat degradation. To blame for the degradation are invasive and exotic plants and animals, soil erosion, over-grazing, sediment deposition and more. But help is now on

Mr. Zarwell's presentation will describe the selection of the IBA's, their monitoring, and how these vital habitat areas will be protected, restored, enhanced, and managed.

The 182 nominated sites include most of Iowa's richest pockets of biodiversity and most frequently birded habitats, some within easy driving distance of Omaha. Thirty-seven species of birds now make up the state's IBA Criteria Species. One of these, the Piping Plover, is globally threatened; 20 are continentally threatened; and the remaining are species of high priority. Many, if not all, of these declining species are also found in the eastern counties of Nebraska as well.

This may sound serious, and it truly is, but Mr. Zarwell's talk is upbeat. And we can be inspired by what average birders are accomplishing for our bird population. As a result of Audubon's new program, Iowa birders have a statewide, science-based, and citizen-led

its way, and we can be a part of it.

The IBA Program was created by BirdLife International in Europe in the mid 1980's and has expanded to 132 nations. Since the mid-1990's, the U.S. portion has been administered by National Audubon, and this initiative is now moving forward in 46 states, with a strong and growing record of achievement.

project by which they are striving to halt and reverse population declines from habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation. Audubon members at the grassroots level can play a part.

All members and friends are invited to join us on August 7, 7:00 P.M., at Fontenelle Forest's Camp Brewster, 1313 Bellevue Boulevard.

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Garden Walk,

This garden represents what one can do through landscaping with native plants.

Heron Haven Butterfly Garden: 11809 Old Maple Road, Omaha. This butterfly garden (also attracts birds and dragonflies) at ASO's headquarters, was sponsored, designed and planted and maintained by the Ivy League Garden Club of Omaha. Much of the design and work has been done by Eunice Levisay, member of the club and ASO.

Calendar of Events

July 7 (Mon) Conserv/Legisl. Meeting

July 13 (Sun) Garden Walk (Rain Date July 27)

July 19 (Sat) ASO Picnic - Heron Haven

Aug 4 (Mon) Conserv/Legisl. Meeting

Aug 6 (Wed) Board Meeting

Aug 7 (Thur) Important Bird Areas Program

If You're Handed a Lemon, Make Lemonade

All kinds of quotes come to mind as I bring myself back to reality to concentrate on environmental issues rather than on the devastating and senseless vandalism that took place at our office building at Heron Haven last week.

Fortunately, no one was hurt, and the building was left in one piece. Thanks to some loyal and dedicated Audubon members, Garry and Mary Mick and their daughter Karen, Duane and Kathy Schwery, Steve Lamphere, Betsy Haas, and Debbie Hunsberger, all the shattered glass has been picked up, bookshelves, books and tables have been replaced, and all corners have now been cleaned. We have made lemonade!

Good News Department

The 98th Nebraska Legislature of 2003 adjourned without taking more funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund, as had been proposed by Governor Johanns. Our letters and phone calls helped save the account. Last weekend I attended the NACEE (Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education) conference and was asked to give a presentation on our Heron Haven wetland sanctuary.

While there, I also received some very good information on the best way to request more funding for environmental projects from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund. Although we have already received over \$250,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund for our Heron Haven projects, the door is open for more grant opportunities. We still have an Asian Reed Canary Grass problem to solve.

In reading an article in the American Rivers Spring/Summer 2003 issue, I found that while it took almost 100 years to have the first 450 dams removed from across the country, 100 dams have come down since the Edwards Dam was

By Ione Werthman

see the day when the Missouri River becomes a more natural river along the border of Nebraska?

Kudos to ASO. In the June issue of the *Audubon* magazine, in a special tribute to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Refuges across America, ASO was recognized for our assistance to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in counting the Snow Geese at DeSoto NWR and for helping to restore native prairie grasses at Boyer Chute NWR.

Bad News Department

In 2002 no increase was reported in the population of the endangered Whooping Cranes from the previous year. The cranes' population increase largely depends on wet conditions. Because the Platte River basin in Nebraska serves as a critical stop along this passage, development along the River and loss of water in the basin must be a cause of concern for all of us.

I am reminded of a passage from "History of the Catholic Church in Nebraska" by Henry W. Casper, S.J. The passage reported that in the 1800's, the Catholic Church hierarchy divided the Omaha and Lincoln dioceses at the Platte River because "the Platte River was too treacherous for parishioners to cross." Going across the Platte in some sections today, one might say, "Be careful, you might get your feet wet."

The long-running dispute over how to regulate two types of irrigation along the Platte River, well versus surface, is not getting any easier for Nebraska authorities. Who has more right to the water? Ground water or surface water irrigators?

The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District has said that "unpermitted diversions" of ground water by well irrigators above Lake McConaughy violate the Nebraska Constitution. Central Power has filed a complaint with the Nebraska Natural

removed from the Kennebec River in Maine four years ago. Dam removal is proving to be an asset to communities by reconnecting the stream with its community and restoring a more natural ecological balance. Will we ever

Resources Department. On Pumpkin Creek, which was depleted by withdrawals of nearby ground water last year, a judge in Chadron ruled that he lacked jurisdiction to decide the dispute brought

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Omaha Raptor Team - A Committee of ASO

- By Alison O'Connor

Spring Banquet Awards, Ceremonies

ASO members gathered at Johnny's Steakhouse on May 8 to mark the close of our year and to recognize outstanding service. Photos submitted by ASO members for our annual contest were exhibited and prizes awarded.

Our guest speaker and prolific author Paul Johnsgard delivered an address on Grassland Birds, with emphasis on the prairie chicken and grouse families.

Senator Ben Nelson was chosen to receive ASO's Conservation Award for his recent vote against oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. While Governor of Nebraska, his record of protecting our environmental interests locally and statewide were far-reaching and numerous.

We are grateful to Mr. Nelson for his stance and his actions. Present to accept the award was Don Nelson, State Coordinator for Senator Nelson.

Nelli Falzgraf was chosen to receive ASO's Award for Outstanding Service

Outgoing President Eric Scholar was presented with an Award of Recognition for his service in the office of President for the past three years. Thanks, Eric, for your commendable leadership.

The Photo Contest entries received the usual welcome reception. The judges awarded First Place in the Wild Animals category to Essie Grill for three turtles and Second Place to Ruth Green for Prairie Dog pair.

In the Insect category First Place went to Kathleen Rose for Monarch Butterfly and Second Place went to Neal Ratzlaff for Long-horned Beetle. For Wild Birds, Robert Rose won First Place for Song Sparrow; Marsha Senft won Second Place for a pair of Brown Pelicans flying.

For Wildflowers, Neal Ratzlaff won First Place for side-oats grama; Marsha Senft won Second Place for Hibiscus. Neal's photo of the side-oats grama also won Best of Show, and Ruth Green's Prairie Dogs won Most Popular.

Thanks to Jackie Scholar for successfully organizing and carrying out

to our chapter. Nelli held the offices of Treasurer and Second Vice-President, Chair of the Finance and Naturestudy Committees, and cochaired the Student Art Contest. She assisted with the Kestrel and Tern and Plover Projects for several years, and numerous additional tasks through the years. Congratulations, Nelli, on this honor.

Conservation/Legislation,

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by the Spear T. Ranch of Bridgeport against other landowners along Pumpkin Creek.

Who should set the rules, the courts or the Nebraska Legislature and water regulators? At present, surface water users obtain water rights from the state. In times of shortage, the oldest water rights have priority. Ground water users obtain permits from the Natural Resources Districts. The Supreme Court ruled in 1933 that "the owner of land is entitled to appropriate subterranean waters found under his land, but he cannot extract and appropriate them in excess of a reasonable and beneficial use upon the land which he owns, especially if such is injurious to others who have a substantial right to the waters."

this event, to Eric Scholar for serving as our host, and to Duane Bright for his work on the photo contest.

The question lies in the words "reasonable." In Nebraska thus far, reasonable use requires the water to be used on the land where the well is located, except for irrigation, municipalities, and for industries. Need I say more? Such disputes could have far-reaching implications for water users along streams, including the cities of Omaha and Lincoln, which have well fields along the Platte River.

Join us for more conservation and legislative action discussions at our monthly meetings at the Audubon Office, 11809 Old Maple Road. Next meetings - July 7 and August 4, 7:30 pm. Become an informed environmentalist!

Successful Heron Haven Cleanup

May 17 was a beautiful spring day to be outside at Heron Haven. ASO volunteers and members of Scout Troop #91 from Elkhorn cleaned up roadsides, perimeters, and trails and shared a barbecue-potluck lunch.

By Pauline Dickey

Special thanks to the helpful person named Jim (I apologize for not recalling his surname) who stepped up to grill hot dogs and hamburgers; Ed Higgins for the

Many thanks go to ASO volunteers Laurine Blankenau, Pauline Dickey, Betsy Haas, Paul and Michele Kardell, Dick Sieling, Ione Werthman. Also, thank you to Scouts Chad Allely, Schyler Drain, Amanda Erwin, Andrew Erwin, Matt Gray, Nick Haas, Will Kardell, Matt Kathol, and Justin Reed.

loan of his grill and specific instructions; Paul Kardell for hauling trash to the dump, and to Scout leaders of Troop #91, Paul and Michele Kardell. Thank you to Keep Omaha Beautiful for giving or lending needed supplies and equipment.

Everyone worked hard and ate heartily. Sadly, we didn't solve the issue of preventing litter from being thrown into the property.

Sarpy County Bird Count

Clem Klaphake would like to thank all those who helped with the Sarpy County Spring Bird Count of May 11, 2003.

Despite the cool and windy weather, the number of species—133— was very high.

Highlights included a **Yellow-breasted Chat** in Swanson Park just off Cornhusker Highway; **3 Blue Grosbeaks**, one in Swanson Park and 2 in western Sarpy County; **17 warbler species**; **9 sparrow species**; **4 vireo species**; and a **large flock (25+) of Boblinks**.

DeSoto Bird Count

By Jerry Toll

The April 16 DeSoto Spring Count was a slow one. Six participants, Steve Lamphere, Dick Rasmussen, Don and Janis Paseka, Bob Berry, Refuge Biologist, and me. Everyone else was an Indian Caves for the ASO field trip.

We birded only DeSoto Refuge, and it was early in the migration season. So we saw only 77 species. We were strong on shorebirds with 6 species, and sparrows—11 species. The best bird was a **Broad-winged Hawk**.

Outdoor Recreation and Birding Attracting More

While Bird Populations Decline

Though the 2001 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation shows a record number of Americans are participating in birding and outdoor recreation, ironically, the amount of birds available for birders to see has significantly decreased. According to Audubon's 2002 WatchList, there has been a 30 percent decrease in several species listed over the past 30 years. Many, like the Cerulean Warbler, have seen up to a 70 percent decrease.

"With the increased interest in birding, it's important to educate new birders about the next level of involvement,"

birders to participate in programs that protect bird habitats, to help monitor species numbers, and to become advocates for changes in laws and policies that would benefit WatchList species."

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife survey also showed that some 54 million enthusiasts participated in birding around the home, while more than 42 million observed wildlife and 14 million photographed wildlife around the home. This increase is more specifically illustrated in another survey compiled by the U.S. Agriculture Department's Forest Service, which indicated 71 million people watched birds

said John Flicker, President and CEO of the National Audubon Society. "At Audubon, we encourage

in 2000, up from 21 million in 1982 - making birding the fastest growing outdoor activity in the nation.

Addresses to Remember

President George W. Bush
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Washington D.C. 20500-0001

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fax: 202-456-2993

Senator Ben Nelson

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Senator Chuck Hagel

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Memorials

The Audubon Society of Omaha greatly appreciates the memorials it receives.

When sending your gift, please identify the person you wish to memorialize. Please also give the name and address of the person to be notified.

Bequests

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

Birdline

For an update on the sightings in the state, call 292-5325.



Report your sightings after listening to the tape.



If you find an injured bird of prey, please contact a Raptor Recovery Center volunteer at 402-734-6817 or 402-731-9869.

Audubon Society of Omaha, 11809 Old Maple Road, Omaha 68164

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

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