

# The Meadowlark



September 2012

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*ASO is a Chapter of the National  
Audubon Society Serving Eastern Nebraska  
and Western Iowa*

## September's Fall Migration Field Trip

by Justin Rink

Join us Saturday, September 15th at 8:30am down at the Fontenelle Forest Wetlands. Be sure to bring optics, a hat, long pants, insect repellent and sunscreen. It could still be quite warm in September as we scour the woodlands for fall migrants.

## September General Meeting: Prairie Pioneer Cemeteries

By Jerry Toll

Consider the cemetery. It is not a place we think about much, but cemeteries are repositories of human history. We each have our personal histories of family plots and annual visits, but cemeteries also contain the remains of the people who have shaped the world. Some cemeteries stand out in our memories for what they represent. Arlington Cemetery, Normandy Beach or the Congressional Cemetery come

to mind. At our September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, **Glenn Pollock** will show us that some cemeteries also play a role in natural history. As the pioneer wagons rolled across the prairies, death was a constant companion. Cemeteries appeared to accommodate the dead. Many of them disappeared as townships blossomed temporarily then died. However, some of them survived long enough to be set aside as community or family cemeteries. Some of these are to this day preserved as remnants of a prairie landscape of bygone days. Glenn has visited many of the local prairie pioneer cemeteries which will be the focus of his presentation. They are repositories of seed stock of prairie plants prized by prairie ecologists and enthusiasts alike. Glenn has visited cemeteries in Scotland, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Australia. He will discuss how they are repositories for heirloom cultivars in those regions.

Glenn Pollock has been a mainstay of the ASO organization for years. He served on the Board of Directors and has managed our

14 acre Audubon Prairie admirably for years. Its beauty and plant diversity reflects his thoughtful touch. He also manages Vincent Bluff Prairie near Council Bluffs and has a "micro" prairie in the yard of his Omaha home. His enthusiasm for prairies has led him to be involved in a number of projects in our region and travel widely visiting and sharing with others their grassland habitats.

Glenn Pollock will be our speaker for the general meeting Thursday, September 13 starting at 7 pm. Please help kick off our 2012-13 ASO meetings by attending at the Hanscom Park United Methodists Church, 4444 Frances St (one block south of 45<sup>th</sup> and Center Streets). The program will be followed by a brief business meeting and conclude with a social time and cookies. This free meeting is open to the public and everyone is welcome.

## Upcoming Bird Seed Sale October 20 & 21

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## NEW Frontiers: Range Expansion in Nebraska

by Justin Rink

As the climate continues to change at an alarming rate, many birds are finding themselves pushed out of breeding areas they have utilized for millennia and forced to find more suitable areas (usually further north) in which to breed. There may come a time in the near future when Maryland's state bird, the Baltimore Oriole may no longer breed within its confines. Sometimes range expansion can lead to environmental issues. The Blue-winged Warbler has pushed its way into the more northerly breeding range of the Golden-winged Warbler with which it hybridizes. As little as forty years ago, these two ranges were fairly separated with just a small zone of overlap where the two species could intermingle. Now the Blue-winged is actually replacing the Golden-winged and hybrids such as Brewster's and Lawrence's Warblers are observed more frequently.

Nebraska has seen its own incursion of species that at one time were quite uncommon or non-existent as recently as fifty years ago. Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of the Great-tailed Grackle. Fifty years ago this bird's range barely crept out of the Southwest and Southern Texas.



*Great-tailed Grackle by Bob and Elaine Wilson*

Today they fill marshes and (sometimes parks and lots) all the way to central Minnesota. In wetlands around various parts of Nebraska they have become quite common.



*summer tanager by Mike Ivan*

A few decades ago it was a thrill to experience the sight or robin-like song of a Summer Tanager in east central Nebraska. Usually, this species was confined to the more southeasterly counties such as Nemaha and Otoe along the Missouri River bottomlands. As recently as the mid 1990s, Summer Tanagers started becoming commonplace far

north as Fontenelle Forest. Today it is possible to hear or observe as many as eight of these colorful woodland denizens in early to mid May.

A small foothill or arid land specialists, Lesser Goldfinches are also finding Nebraska more to their liking as more and more of these black-backed (there is a green-backed race further west) birds are reported each year as they trickle down from the Black Hills region. However they are confined to their habitat in "Wyobraska" counties such as Sioux, Scottsbluff, and Kimball. There are extralimital records as far east as Douglas County.

In May of 2012 the first state record of a Black-chinned Hummingbird (the desert and dry woods counterpart of Ruby-throated) made an unexpected appearance in a greenhouse in Scottsbluff. Could this actually be a harbinger of things to come as Nebraska changes to a drier climate? In the next fifty years or so could this species actually become more frequent in areas such as Nebraska's southwest corner (McCook vicinity) where the landscape could easily go from arid grassland to a desert in a number of years? The Black-chinned has already taken up summer residence in areas around extreme southwestern Kansas in recent years where the environment is starting to become much more arid.

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## ASO Drew Record Crowd for Prairie Festival

Our annual festival at the Audubon Prairie Sunday, August 12, attracted a crowd of 97 persons, much more numerous than those of past years. In spite of the drought, the prairie grasses, true to their reputation, were green.

The mild day pleased visitors who included all ages from stroller passengers upward.

Prairie manager Glenn Pollock led a hike, explaining the history of the Audubon Prairie, accompanied by Eric Scholar who pointed out the flora and fauna. Clem Klaphake led a second hike finding birds, butterflies and other insects.

ASO members provided cold drinks and cookies.

Thanks to Glenn for sharing his knowledge, to Eric Scholar chief for planning the festival, and to Jackie Scholar, Jerry Toll and Laurine Blankenau for other volunteer assistance.



## BIRD SEED SALE OCTOBER 20 & 21

It is not too soon to be thinking about your bird seed order for this fall. Our supplier, Des

Moines Feed, gives us their estimated fall prices the last week of August and you will receive your order blank in mid September. Please consider ordering some Audubon Seed Products as the profits from this sale are used to fund many of our educational programs. If you have friends or neighbors who might be interested, call or Email Kathleen Crawford-Rose (292-8912 or [katcr@cox.net](mailto:katcr@cox.net)) with their names and addresses.

We will also be asking members for help with the numerous tasks, some requiring strong muscles, others not. The seed bags need to be unloaded at garage sites, and staffers need to be on hand on the dates of the sale for loading and paper work. Please put these dates on your calendar and give Jerry Toll an Email [geritol48@cox.net](mailto:geritol48@cox.net) or phone call (402-453-9239) to let him know that you are available to assist with this major fund raiser.



## New Frontiers

*Continued from page 2*

Of course there are also species whose ranges have retracted due to environmental impacts unknown to us such as Chihuahuan Raven, Common Raven, and Swallow-tailed Kite. However, there are also those species that have reclaimed former haunts where they have

not been observed for a century. Such is the case of the Pileated Woodpecker. These birds began appearing and breeding along mature floodplain forests in Eastern Nebraska during the 1990s.

What will be the next bird to expand its range into Nebraska? What effects will this climate have on the birds that already breed within its borders? Will they be able to cope with environmental changes, or will they have to find new frontiers?



## NOU Meeting

NOU will be meeting jointly with the Inland Bird banding Association Friday Oct 26 to Sunday October 28. The meeting will be held at Fontenelle Forest and will include field trips, banding, a banquet and a program. If you are a non-member and wish to join, please contact Betty Grenon, 402-731-2383 or [grenon925@aol.com](mailto:grenon925@aol.com)



## Butterfly Invasion

In case you haven't noticed, this year we have had an increase in the number of certain butterfly species come through this area this year. The numbers of several butterflies have increased above what we usually see in this area, and some butterflies which we usually don't see here have been coming through in significant numbers. This invasion probably started in the spring when very large numbers of red admiral butterflies were seen in Nebraska and several other states throughout the country.

The red admiral has a wingspan of 1.8 to 2 inches. It is identified by its striking dark brown, red and black wing pattern. The dark wings have orange bands that cross the forewings and on the outer edges of the hindwings. There are white spots on the upper forewings near the leading edge.

Red admirals can't survive in the cold. Each fall they head south, spending the winter in the Carolinas, Georgia and other deep-south states. Like other butterfly species, they lay eggs, die and more are born. When spring comes, new generations begin migrating, repopulating northern states and even reaching Canada. Usually, it's a

migration that goes unnoticed by most people.



*red admiral by Loren Paddleford*

Every 10 years or so, however, the red admiral population booms and spring brings a great happening, says Pat Sutton, a naturalist and writer from Cape May. The last major migration was 2001, so we were due, she says. But this migration is tremendous, she goes on to say. It's likely spurred by the mild winter, which would have allowed Red Admirals to survive farther north and multiply in great number. "This year is probably more so than the other big flights we've had in 1981, 1990 and 2001," says Sutton, who used to work for the New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory and now works as a freelance educator.

In 1990, for example, there were so many red admirals that the ones who died over the ocean — perhaps pushed out by winds — actually washed ashore in noticeable numbers, Sutton says. This year's migration could be even larger than that.

"This seems to be one of the biggest I've ever witnessed," she says. "It's a fascinating happening."

Jane Scott, a Florham Park resident and member of the North American Butterfly Association, spotted a great number of the red admirals and, perhaps, some similar butterflies in Red Bank last week.

"Unbelievable numbers of butterflies. It wasn't just like one cloud of them, but rather just continuously coming by in twos and threes," Scott says. "It was incredible."

What's so great about this migration, butterfly watchers say, is that everyone gets to see the little creatures — not just those who are on the lookout. It's a science lesson for the willing and unwilling.

"The natural world, I think, is something that gives us all hope," says Sutton, who hopes the migration will inspire some to grow gardens to attract wildlife. "Here is a wonderful natural history happening that is exciting — life giving." Although these observations were specific to N.J. many other states including Nebraska observed a large invasion of red admiral butterflies this spring. We have a cotoneaster bush just outside our kitchen door. This spring the bush was invaded with hundreds of these butterflies.

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## Butterfly Invasion

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Although the red admiral invasion was probably the earliest and most notable, several other butterflies were seen in larger numbers than usual. This summer large numbers of dainty sulphur butterflies, little yellows and cloudless sulphurs have been seen in this area. These three butterflies, although regularly seen in Nebraska in late summer and early fall, have significantly increased in numbers compared to recent years.



*phoebis by Babs Paddelford*

They are all members of the Pieridae family which includes the commonly seen clouded and orange sulphurs. All of the sulphur butterflies are shades of yellow with some having black markings on their wings. The caterpillars of these butterflies live mainly on plants of the pea family. These three butterflies are mainly seen in southern states but on occasion large numbers migrate up north. They probably don't breed here or overwinter due to the cold weather. The dainty sulphur (tiny) and little sulphurs are

small compared to the common clouded and orange sulphurs. On the other hand, the cloudless sulphur is much larger.

In addition to these butterflies larger numbers than usual of the buckeye and snout butterflies have been seen. Also the phaon crescent butterfly usually seen in southern states was found at Two Rivers State Recreation Area and Indian Cave State Park. A few weeks ago a white M hairstreak was seen in Fontenelle Forest. This was a record for the state of Nebraska.

It is not known for certain but this proliferation may be a result of the early spring and warm weather. Also a recent report in the "Journal of Climate Change" indicates that both butterfly proliferation in some areas and butterfly dieoffs may be due to global climate change. In any case, in the last few weeks of summer keep your eyes open in case some other unanticipated butterflies appear.

The author wishes to thank Babs and Loren Padelford for their advice and suggestions for the article and for their photos of the butterflies.



## Taking Action: Wolves

by **Bob Fuchs**

Although we often think of the Audubon Society of Omaha and

the National Audubon Society as organizations that mainly promote the preservation of birds and their habitat, most of us have interests in other kinds of wildlife as well. The re-introduction of the gray wolf into Yellowstone National Park in the early 1990's has been a spectacular success, so much so that the health of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem has benefitted from the presence of this very intelligent, very social species. In fact, the grizzly bear has been one of the greatest beneficiaries, because wolves prey on elk and bison, and the grizzlies get to partake of the carcasses. Wolf predation tends to make elk and bison herds genetically stronger.



*photo by allaboutwolves.com*

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## Taking Action

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However, the ancient fear of wolves, bound up in mythology, rears its ugly head every year, especially in Idaho and Wyoming. Last year, Congress de-listed the gray wolf from protection under the Endangered Species Act, and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved management plans that allowed Idaho to kill 400 wolves, all in the name of protecting elk for hunters. Cabela's even sponsored wolf hunts, awarding points to "hunters" for their kills (I no longer shop there). There is no scientific evidence that wolf predation significantly affects the elk population so much that hunters would have less to hunt. Wolves only strengthen the gene pool.

This year, the focus is on Wyoming. Wyoming couldn't even come up with a plan that would provide any protection for wolves outside of Yellowstone National Park in past years, but the Interior Department is ready to approve hunts that would allow the killing of adults and pups anywhere in the state outside of Yellowstone, strictly for political reasons.

If you are interested in stopping the slaughter of Wyoming wolves, and wolves elsewhere, you can find more information

and action steps at the websites of several organizations, among them the Center for Biological Diversity ([www.biologicaldiversity.org](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org)), Defenders of Wildlife ([www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)), and Earthjustice ([www.earthjustice.org](http://www.earthjustice.org)). Take action soon.

Bob Fuchs  
Conservation Chair



## Remembering One of Ours

Mary Catherine Harberg, known to many Audubon members, died recently.

In the past she volunteered for Audubon and served on the Board of Directors. Since 2004 she was living in Boulder, Colorado.

Audubon remembers her with fondness.



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



Raptor Recovery  
Nebraska™

## ASO Board Meeting

Audubon Society of Omaha Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 4, at 7:00 pm.



The animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear.

They are not brethren, they are not underlings, they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth.

*The Outermost House, Henry Beston.*

## Memorials

The Audubon Society of Omaha greatly appreciates the memorials it receives. When sending a 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, NE 68103-0542

## Addresses to Remember

### President Barack Obama

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

Comments: 202-456-1111

### Senator Ben Nelson

U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510; 202-224-6551  
fax 202-228-0012; Lincoln phone: 402-437-5246;

Omaha phone: 402-391-3411;

Omaha address: 7602 Pacific St, #205, 68114

### Senator Michael Johanns

U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 202-224-4224

Lincoln: 402 476-1400

100 Centennial Mall N Rm 294, Lincoln NE 68508-3803

### Representative Lee Terry

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

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

Omaha Address: 11717 Burt St, Omaha 68154

Omaha phone: 402-397-9944

### Representative Jeff Fortenberry

House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515

Phone: -202-225-4806

Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598

Lincoln Address:

### Governor Dave Heineman

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848 Lincoln, NE 68509

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

### Mayor Jim Suttle

Omaha/Douglas Civic Center

1819 Farnam St, Omaha NE 68183

Phone: 402-444-5000 Hot Line: 402-444-5555

Lincoln Capitol Switchboard: 402-471-2311

Washington Capitol Switchboard

Senate: 202-224-3121; House: 202-225-3121

We offer two choices of membership: one includes membership in National Audubon as well as in our local chapter, receiving the *Audubon* Magazine and our newsletter, *The Meadowlark*. A portion of the dues is returned to our local chapter.

The other choice is local membership only: this includes receiving *The Meadowlark* and participation in all of our local activities. Dues all go to our chapter.

### **Membership in the National Audubon Society**

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### **Introductory Membership (1st & 2nd Year) \$20**

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19612 Ridgeway Road

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19612 Ridgeway Road

Plattsmouth, NE 68048 COZCP030Z

### **Bequests**

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

Audubon Society of Omaha Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103 - 0542

Phone: 402-451-3647 - <http://audubon-omaha.org>

Office: 1941 So. 42nd Street, Omaha, NE 68105

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Other Activities:

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	Carol Rasmussen	731-3939
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Send address changes to Kathy Schwery,  
19612 Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth NE 68948 or  
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