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# A Bird's Eye View

**Audubon Society of Omaha** A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 29, No. 10 December 2000

## See `Birds of the Sandhills' by Ruth Green

Thursday, December 14 By Clem Klaphake

diverse geographic area, as large as years she also wrote the `Nature New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Notes' column in A Bird's Eye View. Island combined. Predictably, the From ASO's original formation to the bird life ranges from numerous fall of 2000 when she resigned as breeding species to migrants in 'Nature Notes' writer, Ruth has spring and fall. With the area's been the only person to have a boundaries tapering off slowly in all continuous active role in ASO. directions, it is difficult to give an exact number of bird species In addition to bird banding in her identified. However, the Birds of back yard in Bellevue, Ruth bands Sandhills Nebraska the Checklist (1993) includes 235 Minden and Halsey, Nebraska. She species.

The Sandhills represent a broad and rector, and Field Trip Chair. For 25

Field birds for UNK's Elderhostels at teaches bird identification with

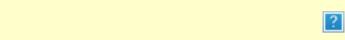
At our December 14 general banding the first Saturday of each meeting, Ruth Green will take us on month from September to April at a journey to see the varied species Schramm State Park. of birds and habitats of the Nebraska Sandhills. Her talk will Come join us Thursday, December include a discussion and slide 14, 7:30 p.m. at the Hanscom Park presentation based on her many Methodist Church, 4444 Frances years of birding and banding there.

birding skills and knowledge. She birds) of our Sandhills region. has held numerous positions in birding and organizations. She has banded birds the program, concluding with for more than 25 years and has coffee, cookies, and conversation. served as President of the Inland Field guides for many nature-Bird Banding Association.

as the first secretary of ASO, as Di

Street, for an informative and entertaining presentation on the Ruth is familiar to many for her flora and fauna (with the focus on

nature-related A short business meeting will follow related topics, T-shirts, and other items will be for sale before and A member of the Omaha Bird Club after the program. This is your last from which ASO evolved, she served chance to purchase Christmas gifts from ASO!



## Two Christmas Counts Replace December Field Trip

On Saturday, December 16, the pot luck compilation supper will be 101st nationwide Christmas Bird held at Betty's home following the Count will take place in the Omaha day's trips. Area. It will also serve as the December field trip.

birders and are warmly encouraged contact the Sector Captain of your information, quadrant captain of your choice: preference, contact Mindy Sheets Clem Klaphake (292-2276), who will at 642-4121 Ext 5405, or Jerry Toll. cover Fontenelle Forest; Jerry Toll (453-9239)—Glenwood, Iowa, area; (731-8249)—Lake Kovanda Manawa, Ruth Green (292-0451)— e-mail MORSAG@DOANE.EDU); Jerry Platteview. Or call Betty Grenon, Count Coordinator (731-2383), to be jertol@radiks.net); co-captains Jim assigned to an area.

Wear vour warmest waterproof clothing if weather Calhoun (498-8941). requires. Bring plenty of hot liquids and a hearty lunch. A

year the DeSoto-Boyer This Christmas Bird Count will be held Participants need not be expert on Sunday, December 17. Please join. For the necessary choice for meeting times and other please call the details. If you don't have a sector

> Captains are Mark Orsag, Hitchcock (contact him through Jerry Toll or Toll, Boyer Chute (453-9239 or Kovanda ((731-8249) and Don Paseka (727-9229), DeSoto Refuge; and/or and Warren Bielenberg, Fort

#### Continued on page 3

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#### **Scholarly Notes**

#### Thanks, **Volunteers**

with Thanksgiving still fresh in

our minds and with Christmas and the end of the year fast approaching, think it is appropriate to give thanks to all those who volunteer to keep ASO a viable organization.

#### **Bird Seed** Chair, Others

Our bird seed sale concluded a short time ago. It takes many people to make that a success. Chairperson Sally Hansen especially deserves much gratitude for taking the helm and steering us through this event and its myriad tasks.

Special thanks too to Jerry Toll who coordinated the volunteers for the sale dates and locations.

We are much indebted to garage owners Neal & Izen Ratzlaff, Duane Bright, Dave Workman, and Barbara Sennentz who provided storage and pickup sites yet another year.

Jim McLochlin, Loren Padelford, Jim Kovanda, Jerry Toll, and anyone I may not know of deserve praise for performing the heavy work of unloading the bird seed. I do

years. This fundraiser, of paramount to importance organization, was a success.

#### our Educator at

Heron Haven

#### **Board of Directors**

I am grateful to Brian has who Jensen, volunteered to chair the Education Committee, and to Jo Bartikoski, who accepted a position as Director.

All of our elected chairs deserve much credit. Many given their time over the years, but we need additional people to take limited in what we can January 20. do.

seeking volunteers to chair both Membership Publicity Committees. The Membership Chair will be involved in recruiting new members to our organization, a vital Publicity task. The provides Chair the media with information regarding our events.

If you are interested in either of these positions or if you know of someone who is interested, please contact me at 551-5045.

#### **Omaha Raptor Team**

Also part of ASO is the Omaha Raptor Team, who I want to thank for their programs and participation. We are happy to have them and their handsome birds with us. The Raptor Team and the birds are an important presence at ASO.

Audubon Nebraska, our State Office, is applying for funds to support a full-time educator at Heron Haven. This position will run for at least three years and will help us in many ways. I have appointed a committee chaired by Clem Klaphake and charged with developing a job description for this position if the funding comes through. Having a full-time educator will greatly enhance the programs and scheduling of activities at the Rookery and wetlands.

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## officers and committee Birding Classes Offered

have January-February at Heron Haven

responsibility. ASO will offer Introduction to Birding I and II classes at heron Haven Without them, we are through Metro Community College on Saturday mornings, 9-12:00, starting

The first 4-week class introduces beginners to the fun of birding and what At present we are to look for to identify birds.

> the It will include a raptor program with live birds and an outdoor classroom and birding session.

Intro to Birding II continues to expand the birder's horizon with in-depth details of the around 430 species of birds that visit or live in Nebraska.

Registration for either or both classes can be made through Metro's noncredit program after January 1.

know that after one-half day of unloading the seed, I was tired.
Finally, thanks to all volunteers who helped with office work and loading the seed on the days of the sale.
I am happy to report that the amount of seed sold equaled that of previous
December Events
4 (Mon) Conserv/Legisl Meeting
6 (Wed) Board Meeting
14 (Thur) General Meeting
16 (Sat) Omaha Bird Count
17 (Sun) DeSoto Bird Count
25 Merry Christmas
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The Omaha Raptor Team
A Committee of ASO
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By Alison O'Connor
We've arrived at the end of the year and of

raptor our introductions. Our final feathered volunteer, Lucy, the Burrowing
Owl, will be introduced
at the December
general meeting. Our
most recent member,
she just joined the alarm call they are discomfort or even

team in September.

Pictured here with me, Lucy is schmoozing the audience at an Omaha Raptor Team program, her first appearance.

While at programs with her, I have yet to have anyone approach and tell me he or she has seen a Burrowing Owl. A grassland species and diurnal, this bird is definitely not one you'd see in your back yardnot in this region, anyway.

acquired Lucy was through a master falconer friend in New York. With the numbers of these birds declining rapidly in the wild, we were fortunate to be able to obtain a chick from a clutch from his captive birds this past spring. She has proved to be a real charmer at programs, especially when sounding off that "rattlesnake"

famous for. Lucy looks additional forward to attending complications, as was our meeting and saying the case with Aldora. hello to all of you.

wild. many times injuries continue to cause the birds

serious

After a difficult six I want to add a few months, she had to be public words to pay respects set free from her pain. to the Omaha Raptor What a blessing she was Team's Short-eared Owl, to our team for the Aldora. Aldora came to short year we had her. us, as many of our birds There will never be have, after sustaining a another Aldora. Our serious injury in the special thanks to the Unfortunately, Frame family and to Dr. these Langley.



#### Two Christmas Counts. . . Continued from page 1

Last year was our first year for the new count circle that now includes much more diverse habitat. Despite a blustery snowy day, a whopping 72 species were recorded, setting a benchmark for future counts.

A family of Trumpeter Swans were in a field at Boyer Chute. Lake yielded 2 Nathan's Lincoln's and 9 Swamp Sparrows.

Neale Woods had a Winter Wren, White-throated Sparrow and a Brown Thrasher. The Fort Calhoun Sector had 2 Common Snipe and Brownheaded Cowbird.

DeSoto Refuge counters saw a Ross' Goose and Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. Hitchcock Nature Center was the place to see Purple Finches, where 53 were present.

We hope to do as well this year with even better coverage. Plan on supper to tally the results.

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#### Environmental/ Legislative Action By Ione Werthman

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As we approach the end of an

other year, questions come to mind-what have we accomplished this year? Has it been enough? What should done have we differently? What can we do before 2001?

#### Before 2001

President Urge Clinton to leave an environmental legacy!

With Clinton's term canyons, great opportunity to sagebrush make Monument designations federal lands. These Rhode designations prohibit located commercialism logging, road-building, oil drilling, and so forth.

This past week the make **Tongass** Forest in Alaska was added to his protection proposal, making it off limits for Successes: logging except when necessary to improve habitat threatened, endangered sensitive species and 1.5 million comments were received in favor use of this proposal.

summer celebrate anniversary of Alaska Lands Act, also threatened called on Clinton to endangered complete the work on Least the Lands Act by Plovers declaring the coastal Sturgeons monument. At that the sure of us to call or write one more year. Clinton and tell him we are just as interested in An article in the South he is!

have come together to could acres of steep-sided years to come. junipersoon ending, he has a covered mountains and South monument. Johnson, National national on an area larger than four river Islands, 50 southwest of Boise.

> areas more these National national monuments.

 Watercraft Ban is or Upheld. Our petitions, Ditto for the endangered nationwide ban on the Coronado of

help efforts of Senators Tom the Daschle (D-SD) and Max (D-MT), the Baucus the and Interior Terns, **Piping** and **Pallid** were, national hopefully, delayed from time, Carter urged all extinction, at least for

(Clinton's) Dakota Argus Leader environmental legacy as News (11/13) had some interesting comments on how the outcome of the Ten conservation groups presidential election shape the ask the President to management of the designate 2.7 million Missouri River system for

Dakota's grassland Democratic senators, use his prerogative to plateaus in Idaho as a Tom Daschle and Tim Gore see Owyhee Canyonlands, continuing support of the management would that is policies miles benefit outdoor recreation and wildlife needs, while Republican Call the President's South Dakota U.S. Rep. comment line, 202-456- John Thune sees a Bush 111, and tell him to presidency as "creating a consensus the approach" to problems. (If my memory serves me, we have been trying the consensus approach for the past 10-15 years and succeeded in having the states sue each other.)

cards and letters have razorback suckers in the to reduce the risk of led the National Park Colorado River and the severe wildfires. Over Service to uphold a Pygmy Owls nesting in **National** personal Forest, as reported by watercraft on the 90 the Arizona Republic

list the Arctic National River two not become a polluted ban. oil field with miles of roads, pipelines and jetports as Prudhoe the Refuge, become.

six months' supply of bird. oil exists there.

Redford modest increase in list in 1967. auto fuel economy standards."

Former past

along decades, Randall Dam to Chief president. conservationists from Standing Bear Bridge across America have near Niobrara, and 59 "Expect more of the the Refuge so it would our views in favor of the of

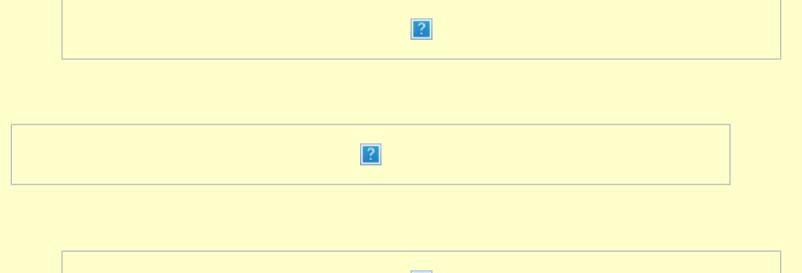
has Increasing. my books, are not the tuned! Do we need the oil? most beautiful of birds, Would we be cutting they do have their place off our noses to spite in the bird kingdom, (October Canyon, a total of 40 Road. issue, Nature's Voice), birds will now be in the "We could save that wild. The birds were much oil through a put on the endangered

President • Missouri River Rider Jimmy Carter, who Defeat. With Clinton's returned to Alaska this veto sustained through the

Now the campaign to miles of the Missouri (11/14). Logging, mining the industries and land use Wildlife Refuge as a Nebraska and South are most likely to be National Monument is Dakota borders—a 39 affected by who is under way. For over mile stretch from Fort chosen as the next

pleaded with Congress miles between Gavins same if Al Gore prevails," to confer permanent Point Dam and Ponca says the newspaper. wilderness protection State Park. More than Because Bush typically on the coastal plain of 10,000 of us expressed comes down on the side landowners. specifically ranchers in the Southwest, his Vice President-elect has already discussed the Bay, 60 miles west of • Condor Numbers are option of undoing some While of Clinton's decisions to California Condors, in create monuments. Keep

our faces? At best, and with a 10-foot Join us for our next predictions have said wingspan, are North Conservation/Legislative no more than three to America's largest flying Action meetings at 7:30 With the p.m, December 4 and anticipated release of January 8, at the 13 more birds this Audubon Office, Heron According to Robert month over the Grand Haven, 11809 Old Maple



## A Tribute to

Linda Modlin

In 1998 ASO awarded our prestigious Conservation Award to Audubon Dakota City, Nebraska, 18th. air-quality for toxic hydrogen Geese leaving sulfide, and in getting a

## November Field Trip **Yields**

**Good Results** 

By Jerry Toll

members The November Field Donna Rhee and Linda trip to DeSoto Refuge Modlin, a crusader from was held Saturday, the Those who for their efforts in arrived there a little securing regulation of early saw most of the standards one-half million Snow

## Citizen **Scientists**

Wanted for

Don't want to get out and bird in the winter? Without putting boots, caps, coats and mittens, you can participate in a vital project to assist in bird tracking our populations. Project Feederwatch, sponsored by the

Project FeederWatch

federal agency to study Refuge. effects of the gas Nelli Falzgraf, who got Ornithology, lets you spewing from IBP's lost on the way, watch the birds from Dakota meatpacking plant.

Following Linda's death eventually united with this past month of the group at the Bob brain cancer, tribute was written by to see some geese. Donna Rhee:

not have to live with across the problem hazardous emissions released from the IBP plant in Dakota City and that the powerful, We decided to search wealthy had responsibility for its but were instead lucky actions when it became enough to find 12 Bald clear that emissions affected the unseen carcass. While health of the people in there, we also saw a neighboring homes, first-year their employees, the Eagle, then a secondemployees' families and year Golden Eagle, the communities.

and federal regulators phase there was environmental problem Hawk and a Kestrel in Nebraska and that it were also seen in the serious. She area. was convinced the Nebraska Legislature it had lost What started out as a sight of the welfare waterfowl field trip and people of Nebraska turned into a raptor in its enthusiasm for field trip. You just industrial growth. She never know. convinced the health care profession there was more it needed to know about the toxic effects of hydrogen sulfide.

"Today we must come to grips with the loss of this amazing lady. Spirited by her dedication and love for family and her community, and in spite of tremendous Linda adversity, Modlin's efforts will make a difference in the lives of people throughout America. All of us who had the privilege of knowing Linda have been touched by a soul that will change us forever."

Meanwhile, Cornell City discovered the little- your window. known town of Modale, lowa. Nelli was this Starr overlook and got

The real treat for the "Linda Modlin dedicated 14 members present the last 10 years of her came off-refuge. At life, selflessly, in an the border between effort to convince the the Refuge and Wilson community that it did Island, we stumbled of Woodcock, and most all were treated to a good look.

corporation for Longspurs on the take flats east of the Refuge these Eagles feasting on an Golden surrounding which I then saw fly past Hitchcock the next morning. Also "She convinced state showing up was a dark Rough-Legged an Hawk. A Sharp-shinned

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

Lab of

Below is a registration form with any information you need.





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## Audubon at Work - 2000 By Ione Werthman

#### Heron Haven **Featured**

Our Wetland sanctuary donating highlighted carousels was recently in Fall/Winter issue of educational projects. Explorer Magazine, a and lowa Nebraska visitor magazine. Pictured was Henricksen with Fireball, the red-phase One hundred years and for the Society.

Pictured Saturday, November on World-Herald were two saw. students Madonna known as Artists' conks, the growing on cottonwood tree at stretching grade students spent Western there with morning learning about birds, participants. mushrooms animals, and nature in general.

#### **Bridge Over Trail**

mud on our trail to the contractions of species Boardwalk. A new in the early winter handicap-accessible bridge over a wet area comparing decade-long on the trail has been intervals built by Boy Scout John continental shifts in Kieran for his Eagle bird Scout requirements.

Special Thanks to the Following **Volunteers:** 

Audubon at Work -

1988 Version

I was one of 1,000

• Duane Schwery and Higgins Ed

Melba Wigg donating about 100 of environmental, her birding and science books for our library.

Sid and Edith Wilson for several for our the projectors for our

## **Jenny Bird Counts**

Screech Owl, one of still counting! That's the six raptors used in the story of the educational programs Audubon Christmas Bird Counts that started in 1900 when 27 observers the went on leisurely strolls Christmas Day, 28, issue of the *Omaha* recording what they Through the from the willingness of Audubon School board members examining some fungi throughout the country, program has a remained alive, to over Heron Haven. The 4th 1,800 areas across the Hemisphere 50,000 over

The scientific and conservation values of these bird counts grow with each season. Not only do we see the obvious charting of the No more slipping in range expansions or periods, but of data, distribution project patterns come to light. (See Page 1 for this vear's Count information.)

podium after Dave's clip that got the biggest laugh of the evening.

He recalled that as he and Senator Exon were arriving in Valentine for a public hearing on the scenic designation, they were greeted in the parking lot by two parading horses.

On the rear of one horse was a sign reading Senator Exon and on the other, Senator Kerrey. You may draw your own conclusions as to the meaning.

That hearing had some hostile moments. I was there to testify. I saw the horses and the black armbands of the rabble rousers and heard their disruptive stomping and boos as we tried to testify. Just another day for Audubon at Work.



### Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival 2001

You are invited to attend the 5th annual Morro Bay, California, Winter Bird Festival January 12-15, co-sponsored by the Morro Coast Audubon Society.

Over 35 field trips will be led by birding experts in this globally important bird area, home to 200-plus species of resident and wintering birds, including Black Brant, shearwaters, jaegers, surfbirds. Last year's sightings included a Short-tailed Albatross on the pelagic trip and five California Condors in the Los Padres National Forest.

Workshops and evening programs will increase your skills. Kenn Kaufman, Brad Schram and George Lepp are presenters. Sign onto www.morrobay.net/birds or call 1-800-231-0592, Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce or call the Audubon Office, 445-4138, for a detailed description of the events.

completing around newly installed past week to Senator windows in Rookery.

- Kathy Schwery and term Carol Ralph painting the woodwork show, the Senator on the windows and showed several video scouting for bargains clips of our Nebraska for venetian blinds, accomplishments which are ordered.
- generously contributing Dave funds for our new computer, printer and machine.
- Jim McLochlin and Garry Mick for ordering the computer accessories and setting it all up in the office.
- Jim McLochlin for creating a website: Audubonomaha.org
- Judy Rettich for donating fireplace accessories to add beauty to our library and donating the cost of its cleaning and inspection. It needs repairs at a cost of circa \$2,000.

casings Nebraskans invited this the Kerrey's "thank you" party, given by him as he completes his final as Nebraska for Senator. As part of the now those 12 years. One clip featured our Audubon Nebraska Judy Pittack for Director, Dave Sands. reminded everyone there of our scanner, many years of efforts in getting the Niobrara River designated a National Scenic River.

> Both Senator Exon and Kerrey played major roles in that effort, but Kerrey's was comments from the



# **Notes from Nature**



### A Birder's Christmas Season

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**By Jerry Toll** 

Sawwhet Owl

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`Tis the weeks `round Christmas, when all through the land

Every birder is stirring, everyone who can!

The captains are thinking of their quadrants so fair,

"Will I have enough people? Will I have enough there?"

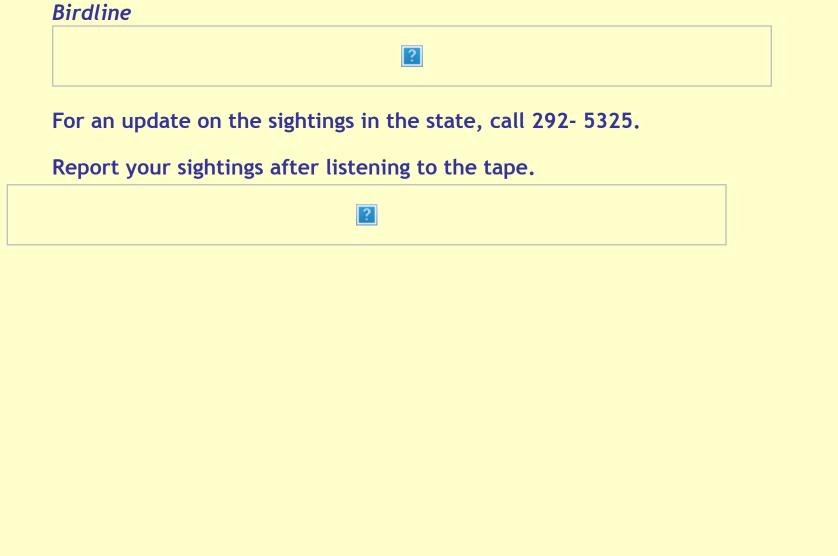
The longjohns and mittens are laid out with great care,

`Fore 5:00 comes early, with owling, I'm there!

Daylight comes, this sunrise is heaven! The species count rises now fast, now slow, If it don't' pick up soon, we'll be abysmally low. We stop at feeders maintained for years By friends of the count who draw us near. They greet us with cocoa, cookie, a warm hearth, The hearth is warm but not so warm as our hearts. We see many birds and are excited by two or three, But we go `cause a Saw-whet is possible in some cedar tree. The lakes are all but frozen, just two nights hence, Most waterfowl absconded in the interim, since. We wish and we wish but it don't change a thing, We could've counted three days `fore the weather's changing. The sky darkens, the sky lightens, then darkens with snow. We fear we must stop `fore the snow is our foe. We drive past barren field whose harvest is long past, But holds for us promise of a different harvest. At last! They are in the road, the object of our huntings, Lots of Longspurs, clouds of Horned Larks and yes, Snow Buntings! `Fore they were driven to the road by the snow, you see, `tis the way on these counties, When one door closes more may open with great bounty. The day wanes, the birds roost out of sight, Now on to the tally, day has become night, Amid jibes and mysteries and stories we wrought, We discover what our joyous labors have brought. On Harlan and Seward and Wachiska and such, On DeSoto and Kearney and Calamus and Scottsbluff! Can I do one, or two, or maybe even three? I shall do Christmas counts `till I fall to my knees! Then on to Big Mac! Oh, what bliss, The rare and the many and the varied. Not one to miss. The season is done, not much left to see, Ah, but next season, next season, holds "what be." hope out of to us may yet **By Jerry Toll Longspurs and Horned Larks** 

Three species of owl we have by 7:00,

**Horned Larks** 



The Audubon Magazine and your membership card will be sent to this address:

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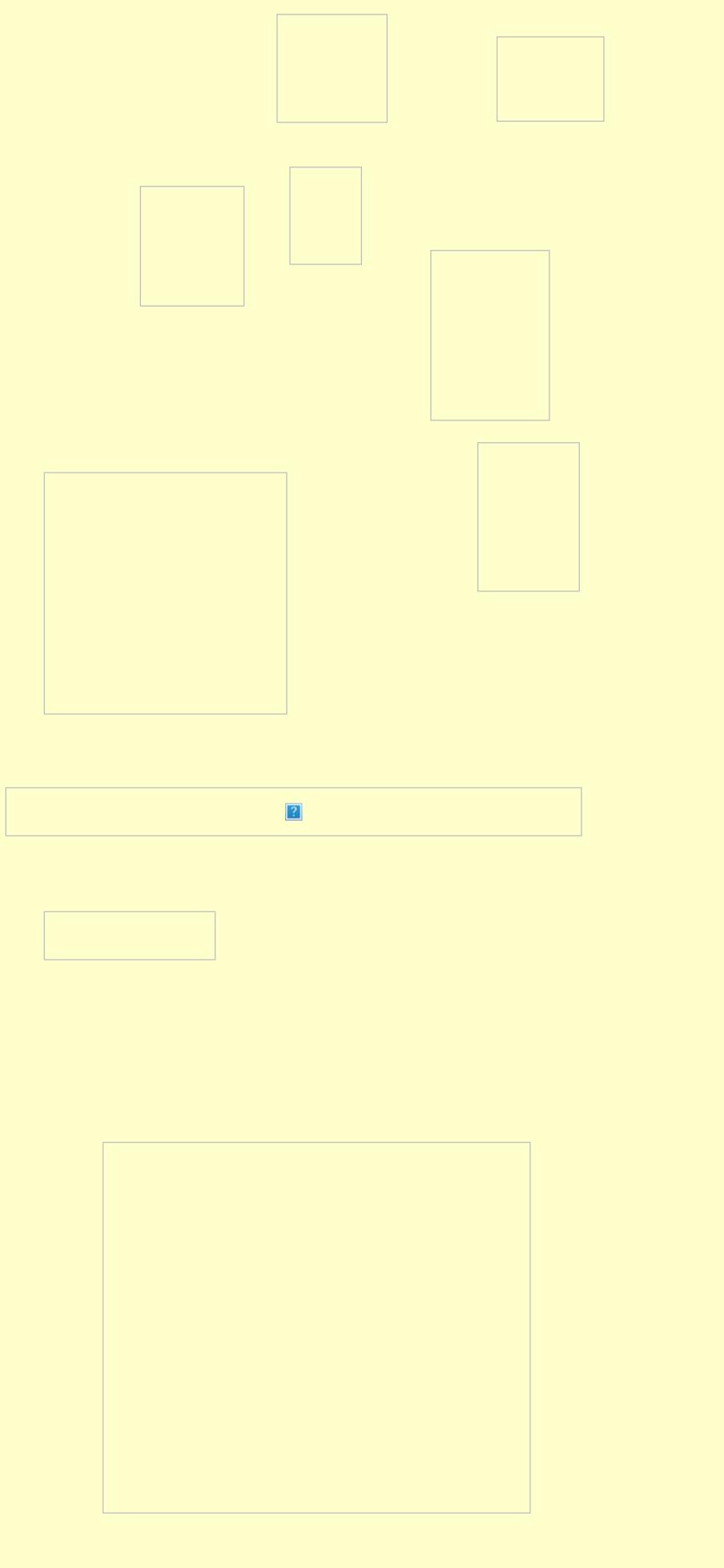
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