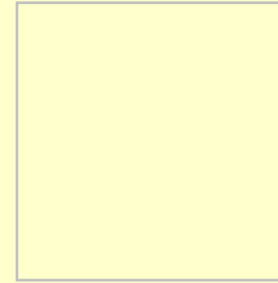




A Bird's Eye View

Audubon Society of Omaha
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Summer 2001 Vol. 30 No. 6



You Are Invited to a Picnic Saturday, July 28, at Heron Haven

No need to put all ASO activities on hold until our season starts up in September.

Come join us on Saturday, July 28, for a pot luck picnic at Heron Haven, 11809 Old Maple Road. Spouses, significant others are welcome. Starting time is 6:00 p.m.

Bring one dish of your choice and any necessary large serving pieces. ASO will provide plates, flatware, glasses, beverages and napkins.

During the evening you may want to enjoy a hike through the wetlands. Be sure to bring repellent. Barring strong winds, the mosquitoes, though uninvited, will be attending.

A mid-summer lull usually descends upon us by late July, making the date of the 28th ideal for a friendly gathering. Don't pass up this opportunity to enjoy good food, good company, and, if you wish, a nice hike past the pretty butterfly garden, over the boardwalk and through the woods.



Larry Shackman Recognized for Outstanding Service at Close-of- Year Festivities

On May 10 our traditional end-of-year banquet for members and guests marked the close of the current year. President Eric Scholar acted as Master of Ceremonies at this event, held at Celebrations.

Receiving the award for Outstanding Service was Larry Shackman, who completes four years as Director on our Board. Larry was recognized for his work as Engineering Consultant at Heron Haven where he estimated costs and supervised restoration on numerous projects, resulting in substantial savings for ASO.

Larry supervised remodeling of the Rookery and continues to provide consulting for building maintenance. He worked with contractors on construction of the boardwalk and the newly completed photo blind and is working on a flood prevention plan.

Dave Sands, Director of Audubon Nebraska, spoke to us about recent accomplishments around the state, especially the major new expansion and developments at Rowe Sanctuary, Wildcat Hills and Spring Creek Prairie.

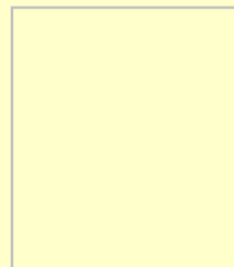
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"A Potpourri of

Entomology" Wednesday,

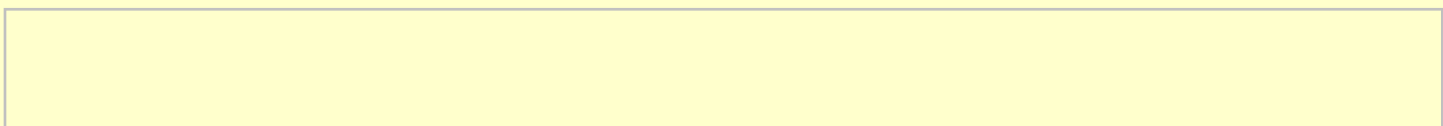
July 11, by Duane Bright

Having photographed many intricate and colorful insects, including moths and butterflies, Duane Bright has a collection of specimens to show us at the Rookery, next to Heron Haven's wetland, on Wednesday, July 11, 7:30 P.M.



Duane's presentation is part of the Nature Study series, which typically takes a break during the summer months. But what could be more appropriate than a look at moths and butterflies, both plentiful this time of year, as well as other species, some of them familiar, some not.

Continued on page 3



by Eric Scholar

Scholarly Notes

Summer Picnic Spring Banquet, Continued from page 1

I want to remind everybody about the second of what I hope will be an annual event for our members, the picnic to be held on Saturday evening, July 28, at Heron Haven.

The Northwest High School Swing Choir, led by Tim Marsden, entertained us with spirited musical numbers.

I hope as many persons as possible will attend this potluck dinner. It is a good opportunity for us to get together in a relaxed atmosphere, to visit, and if we choose, enjoy a walk through the grounds of the woods and wetland.

Photo contest entries and winners were displayed. The contest was coordinated by Duane Bright.

Officers for 2001-2002 were installed.

Thanks to Jackie Scholar, Chair of the Banquet Committee, to Linda Schulz, who donated door prizes, to Jenny Henricksen, who assisted with decorations, to Sandy Kovanda, who created table decorations, and all who helped organize our spring gala and make it a success.

Jackie and Eric Scholar

Bylaws Revisions

A second reminder concerns changes in our bylaws. For the past several months, a committee and the board have been involved in updating and changing some portions of our chapter's bylaws. This has involved hours of tedious work.

Many thanks to the revision committee headed by Ed Higgins, assisted by Nelli Falzgraf and Laurine Blankenau, for their tireless work.

Banquet guests Kip and Stacy Smith, David Hemmingsen, Alison O'Connor, Michele and Paul Kardell with their door prizes.

The board has now approved these changes and any significant alterations and amendments will appear in this newsletter and on our website. Please take a few minutes to read them over. The general membership will be asked to approve or give input on them at our general meeting in September.

Falzgraf, 2nd Vice President; Kay Strong, Corresponding Secretary; Bob Fuchs, Director; Sue Mattix, Director, and Dick Rasmussen, our Field Trip Chair. I appreciate their willingness to volunteer their time. I am sure they will make valuable contributions to the Board.

Birdline

For an update on the sighting

Report your sighting

Board Members

My thanks to Ed Higgins, 2nd Vice President; Kathleen Rose, Corresponding Secretary; Larry Shackman, Director; and Eunice Levisay, Director; who will be going off the Board at this time. I appreciate the time they have spent helping ASO over the last few years. At the same time, I want to welcome new Board members Nelli



The Omaha Raptor Team

A Committee of ASO

Photographers' Art Displayed at Spring Banquet



By Alison O'Connor

Not only do our members love and work to protect the natural beauty around us, some have captured it in photographs.

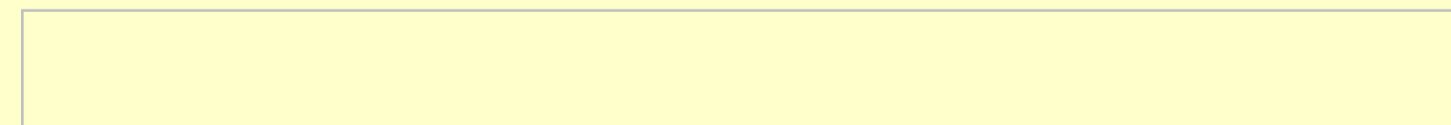
As in they have done in previous years, several of these talented photographers submitted entries for the photo contest, adding visual pleasure to the festivities of the banquet, where the photos were displayed, with results of judging announced.

Duane Bright, Coordinator, announced the winners.

Best of Show: Betty Allen for Monument Valley Sand Dunes scenic.

People's Choice (voted at the banquet by those present): Black-

The school season has ended, and we've thoroughly enjoyed the teaching excursions we've made so far this year. We've visited churches, organizations, and schools. For example, pictured here is volunteer Sherry Seibert and "Bubo," our Great Horned Owl, visiting Sue Bonacci and the students at Field Club Elementary. We had a great time sharing a bit of wildlife with everyone.



A Potpourri of Entomology," Continued from page 1

Learn more about the million species of arthropods, the most successful animal phylum living in more varied habitats than any

Though we will be entering fewer classrooms through the summer, we will continue educating the public about raptors and conservation at the libraries' summer reading programs and various other public functions.

Be sure to come and see the Omaha Raptor Team! Our friends from Wildlife Learning Encounters will be out and about teaching this summer too.

To learn about these intriguing creatures, join us on July 11 at the Rookery for the summer Nature Study session.

browed Albatross by Robert Rose.

animal, of which more than three-fourths are insects, the most adaptive and diverse of all.

In the category of **Scenics**: First place went to Betty Allen for Monument Valley Sand Dunes;

A large part of arthropod success is an exoskeleton, covering all segments and appendages. The armor protects from moisture loss and predators. Disadvantages include robotic movement and vulnerability when the animal casts off the old cuticle to grow into a larger one.

Second Prize to Kathleen Crawford-Rose for Nebraska Winter.

In the category of **Mammals**: first place went to Robert Rose for his photograph of a Leopard;

Second Place went to Garry Mick for Squirrel.

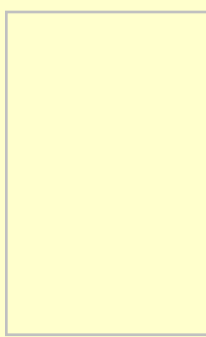
In the **Insect** Category, Ruth Green won first place for a Question Mark and second Place for a Viceroy.

In the **Bird** Category - Robert Rose won first place for Black-browed Albatross;

Ruth Green won second place for a photo of Red-billed Gulls.

Congratulations, winners, and warm thanks to all who submitted their photos.

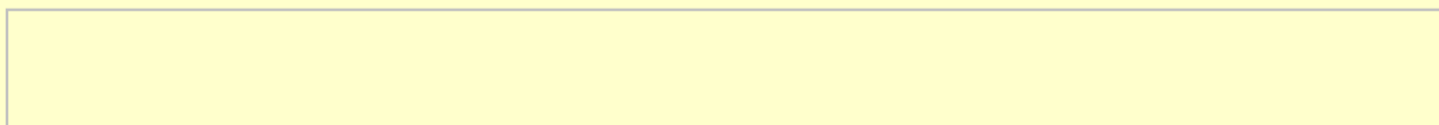
Our thanks go to Duane Bright for coordinating the contest and helping to make the banquet an evening to enjoy.



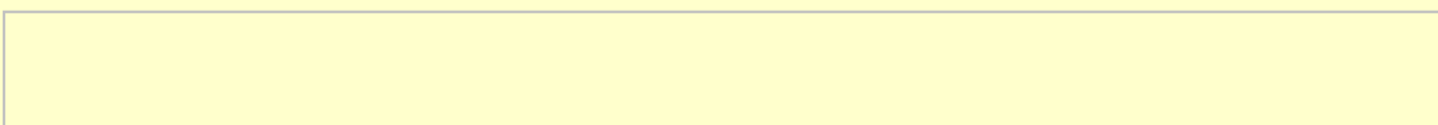
If you find an injured bird of prey, please contact a Raptor Recovery Center volunteer at 402-734-6817 or 402-731-9869.



4



Environmental/ Legislative Action By lone Werthman



Prairie-Chickens - The Debate

Federal Conservation their contracts with Reserve Program. processors."

Continues

Should there be hunting of Prairie-Chickens in Southeast Nebraska? Last Fall a limited hunting season of Greater Prairie-Chickens in Eastern Nebraska was conducted by the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission.

A Commission study concluded that Jefferson, Gage, Pawnee and Johnson counties comprise the birds' northernmost extension of the Flint Hills population, and that a population of 4,000-6,000 birds existed in that region.

Because the Prairie-Chicken has been considered a game species in Nebraska since 1930, the Game & Parks Commission recommended that 300 free permits, each allowing the taking of two birds in Southeast Nebraska, be distributed in a random drawing prior to the season.

What were the results? All of the 300 permits were granted. About 50 birds were taken. Why the low count? To the surprise of the Game Commission and because of a "no hunting of Prairie-Chickens campaign" led by widely-known author Dr. Paul Johnsgaard, most winners of the permits never intended to hunt the birds.

What happens next? A public forum was held June 28 at Game and Parks headquarters in Lincoln.

Hunting is only one concern in the chickens' protection. Their fate in Southeast Nebraska will ultimately be tied to grassland use patterns in that region, particularly as defined by the

That program is working with its farmer partners to keep the CRP strong, as well as to acquire or help manage native prairies for the benefit of Prairie-Chickens and other grassland species.

Also to the credit of Game and Parks, viewing blinds for Prairie-Chicken leks have been maintained at Burchard Lake Wildlife Management Area in Pawnee County for over 25 years. Burchard Lake is also closed to all types of hunting.

Farm Bill in the Making - Again!

A new farm bill debate begins this month in the U.S. House Agriculture Committee that will shape long-term farm policy when the current "Freedom to Farm" law expires next year.

In a recent article in the *Omaha World-Herald*, Chuck Hassebrook, Director of the Center for Rural Affairs in Walthill, Nebraska, said,

"In another generation there will be little left of family farming and ranching and many rural communities if we continue current federal policy.....that of the bigger you get, the more money you get from the government. We must stop paying people more just because they get bigger.

"A sounder rationale for a sound federal farm program would be environmental stewardship, agricultural opportunity, and widespread ownership.

"The next farm bill must prohibit price discrimination against family operations, stop packers from expanding their livestock feeding operations, and protect farmers and ranchers in

I don't know about you, but I grew up on a farm in Nebraska, and, while I know that as a youngster I probably didn't appreciate all the values farm life offered, I certainly can see now what many of our city youngsters are missing.

One reads that every year, nearly one million acres of America's open lands disappear—pristine forests, countryside and farms—bulldozed for housing and shopping malls, and paved into highways and parking lots.

It is clear that a better Farm Bill is a must to keep Nebraska diversified and the rural communities alive.

I recently read that a sound farm policy could also save our oceans. Ever hear of the "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico?

Through a study by a coalition of 250 scientists and the National Academy of Sciences, the nitrogen nutrient pollution in our coastal waters for the past 15 years was found to have been caused mainly by runoff from our Midwestern farms.

Nitrogen from the Mississippi River flowing into the Gulf of Mexico causes algae blooms, which block sunlight in the Gulf, devastate the fish, clams, starfish and crab marine communities there.

Consequently, bottom feeders such as red snapper, red and black drum, croaker, sting rays, and some sharks can't find food.

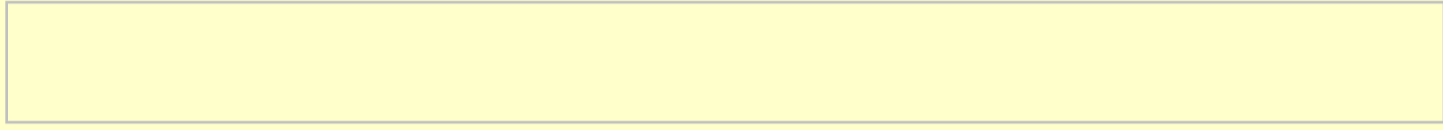
More funds for farmers are needed in the new Farm Bill for conservation assistance—buffer zones, restoration of wetlands, protection of wildlife, improvement of water quality, and combating sprawl—all of which, in turn, also correct the dead zone problem in

May Bird Calendar

By Babs Padelford

Continued on page
7

6



Audubon at Work - 2001

By Ione Werthman

Plans now are to move 168th Street 17 feet farther west, and a planned 5-foot sidewalk on the east has been eliminated. Slopes from the streets will be 3:1 to minimize erosion and allow mowing.

A special non-invasive seed mix will be used along the road. Construction vehicles will not be allowed to park near to or enter the prairie.

On June 19, 2001, the Douglas County Commissioners approved the entire six-part plan for the entire

"We Can Handle It"

The above photo tells the story. Our Heron Haven Educational Center, as the Union Pacific slogan says, can boast that "We can handle it." Last month Audubon volunteers

We were opposed because one of the last remaining native tallgrass prairies left in the City, Stolley Prairie, on 168th between Dodge and Blondo, would be impacted.

Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Betty Allen, Jenny Henricksen, Kathy Schwery, Pam Vaughn and lone Werthman reached out to 105 three- to-five-year-olds and their teachers from the Montclair pre-school, giving them a live raptor show, a tour of the wetlands, and a "Show and Tell" session of some of nature's jewels. After three hours, the children gathered in our outdoor "bird garden" for lunch.

Stolley Prairie Preservation Plans Approved

It was June 8, 1999, when Audubon members first voiced our opposition at the Douglas County Commission meeting on the State and County Road Department's plan to widen 168th street to four lanes north from the new West Dodge Road interchange.

As we know, ASO had leased the prairie for almost 15 years to prevent housing development encroachment, finally convincing the City to purchase the land to preserve.

At the Commission hearing, Mike Boyle even suggested moving 168th street a quarter to a half-mile west to eliminate any impact on the prairie, but that idea was quickly squelched by John Jacobsen of the State Roads Department. He objected to the cost and (he said) because the project was too far along to redesign.

Since that Committee meeting, prairie preservation experts and/or Audubon members Tom Bragg, Suzanne Hickey, George Cunningham, Glenn Pollock, Barbi Hayes, and I met with the County Roads Engineers and Omaha Parks Division to devise a workable plan to minimize impact on the prairie.

168th Street corridor, including the Stolley Prairie section.

Speaking for the environmental community, I commented to the Commissioners:

"We still find it disturbing that the environmental impact assessments required in the planning of the 168th & Dodge Streets interchange were not required for the upgrading of 168th Street north of the interchange.

"It should have been reasonably foreseeable to expect the need to upgrade that street because of traffic increase. In retrospect, we believe the State fell short in its required environmental impact assessments and the Roads Department should have been more cognizant of the impending environmental impact."

Of special note: Because the City had purchased not only Stolley Prairie but also all of the adjoining property north and south of the prairie from Dodge to Blondo on 168th Street, the Society was asked to help form the master plan for the new Omaha Northwest Park.

This plan calls for a prairie park to complement the Stolley tallgrass prairie. The old cornfields are now being planted into a new man-made prairie. This park is destined to become a passive recreation park for hiking and nature watching only.

National Audubon Society

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

Name

Street

City State

Zip Code

Introductory Membership

(1st & 2nd Year) - \$20

Renewals: 3rd Year - \$25;

4th Year - \$30 thereafter

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11809 Old Maple Road

Omaha NE 68164

PO 3

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Memorials

The Audubon Society of Omaha greatly appreciates gifts that you or your family receives.

When sending your gift, please identify the person for whom the gift is memorialize. Please also give the name and address of the person notified.

Bequests

A bequest to Audubon is a gift to those who wish to support the Society after their death.

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68164

Phone: 445-4138

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2nd Vice President Nelli Falzgraf, 414 Ridgewood Dr, Bellevue 68124
292-9687

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