
The Meadowlark

Summer 2008

Volume 37 Issue 6

ASO is a Chapter

*of the National Audubon
Society*

*Serving Eastern Nebraska
and Western Iowa*

Prairie Festival Planned for Sunday, August 31

By Eric Scholar

of the prairie's flowers.

Our first Prairie Festival will be held Sunday, August 31, at Audubon Prairie (formerly Jensen Prairie) in Omaha, from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. This replaces our Garden Walk as our summertime outdoor event. Rain date is Sunday, September 7.

Children can make dolls out of grass stalks or use prairie plants as paint brushes to create their own pictures. They can also gather prairie flower seeds to take home for planting. This is fun and not at all laborious.

The Audubon Prairie is a surviving remnant of the tallgrass prairies that once covered much of our area. In late August, some grasses can be six to eight feet tall, giving us a glimpse into the setting the first inhabitants of our country knew.

Cold water, ice tea, lemonade and cookies will be served. You are asked to bring lawn chairs if you wish to relax in the shade of our tent; also, bring repellent. For your convenience, portable toilets will be provided.

Prairie wildflowers will be abundant, along with butterflies and birds. The monarch butterfly migration should be underway. Songbirds and raptors make the prairie their home.

To reach the prairie, take 72nd St. to Bennington Road (1/2 block north of McKinley Hwy). Turn east on Bennington and go about 1/2 mile to reach the prairie. (Note: When you enter Bennington Rd, stay on the gravel portion; do not go on the concrete portion). There is parking on the road and next to the prairie. Volunteers will be there to direct parking. .

Activities for the whole family will be part of the day. At 12:30 p.m. and again at 3:30 p.m. a talk along with a hike will be presented by Audubon's prairie manager, Glenn Pollock, who will explain the extraordinary qualities that allowed prairie plants to survive fire, grazing, drought and floods.

Volunteers are needed to carry off this event. If you can help, call Eric at 551-5045 or Laurine at 451-3647. For questions, call Eric or Laurine.

Visitors can join hikes led by experienced birders at 1:00 and 3:00. At 2:00 visitors will be treated to a flower hike, led by a person with specialized knowledge

Join us for a Picnic July 20

On Sunday, July 20, ASO will have its usual summer picnic at the Retreat House, Gifford Farm. Starting time is 4:00 p.m. All members along with spouses and friends are invited.

Presentation, Awards at May 8 Banquet

The Spring Banquet of May 8 at Anthony's Restaurant featured a program by Chad Graeve of the Hitchcock Nature Center.

The dinner is pot luck, so bring a dish to share, as well as any large serving pieces. Other service, sodas, water, glasses, plates, and napkins will be provided by Audubon.

Chad introduced us to his vision and plans for restoring the area to a natural preserve, a process that will require years to accomplish. Chad's energy and resolve are vital for the restoration to happen.

If you wish to hike in the woods before or after the dinner, **be sure to bring insect repellent. Ticks, mosquitoes and chiggers could be a problem.**

To reach the picnic site at Gifford Farm, take

A Service Award was presented to Jackie Scholar

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Continued on page 2

ASO and the Future

By Clem Klaphake

As the newly elected President of the Audubon Society of Omaha (ASO), first I want to thank Elliott Bedows for serving the past three years in that capacity. Three years as president of a volunteer organization can seem like a long time when you have many other interests and commitments.

Volunteer organizations of all types have to compete with more attractions, or maybe distractions, than at any other time. As I meet with other nature organization members from different regions of the U.S, all of them have a serious concern about maintaining their memberships today. The reasons or causes of this may be many and difficult to pinpoint exactly.

Some suggestions are that Americans seem to be `busier' than we have been before. Young and middle-aged parents spend a tremendous amount of time at work and chauffeuring their children to every imaginable activity. We also are known for not taking vacation time we are due or have earned. Many Americans retire with large numbers of vacation days accumulated and unused. Is that what Max Weber, the German social economist, called "The Protestant Work Ethic," and we now just call it the "American Work Ethic"?

Others have suggested that the ubiquitous *internet, email, i-pods, pod-casts* and *list-serves* have taken big chunks out of what free time we do have or allow ourselves to have. And of course television with its big screens and endless cable channels is always there with something of interest to almost everybody 24 hours a day.

Who has time for volunteer organizations interested in promoting bird conservation, taking field trips or listening to speakers on a variety of nature topics?

I think if we are truly interested in what ASO stands for, we all can find time to help out in some small way, convince friends and neighbors to join us, and be a very productive community organization. Globally, change is on the horizon in terms of energy production and consumption. Ecological awareness is going to become a larger and larger factor politically, economically and morally in the coming years. ASO can not and should not only be a part of these changes, but should and can be in

the forefront leading the way.

I want to challenge all of you who are dues-paying members to come out and join us at our general meetings and on local field trips

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It is not too soon to be thinking about your bird seed order for this fall. Many of us discuss Seed products as the profits from this sale are used to fund many of our educational projects.

We will be asking members for help with numerous tasks, some requiring strong muscle, at our next fundraiser.

Spring Banquet, Continued from page 1

for her contributions to ASO. Among these are chairing the Student Art Contest, initiating an award for exceptional service.

A plaque and tribute was presented to our outgoing president, Elliott Bedows, in gratitude.

Photo contest results were announced by Eric Scholar. (See item next page for winners)

On Sunday, June 29, at 7:00 p.m, the dedication of a native bluff-top prairie near Springfield, Nebraska, will be held. ASO members are invited.

Owners Tom Dickerson and Patty Shanahan created for Wachiska Audubon a conservation easement of the 14-acre grassland, one of the few bluff-top prairies remaining on

The property contains most of the tallgrass prairie species including compass plant, lead plant, butterfly milkweed, scurf-pea species and many others. When conditions are r

Tom and Patty built their home next to the prairie approximately 25 years ago with the intention of keeping the prairie undeveloped and intact. They still want to keep it that

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As in the past, ASO photographers' works beautified the room at our Spring Banquet of May 8. Organizer Eric Scholar announced the winners.

Most Popular (voted by those attending): Mike Cameron, Magpie on Deer. Best in Show: Mike Cameron: Black and White of an eagle head.

Birds: 1st place: Mike Cameron, 2nd: Ruth Green, 3rd: Jim Hughes.

Insects: 1st & 2nd place: Mike Cameron, 3rd: Jim Hughes.

Animals: 1st place Mike Cameron, 2nd: Don Westling, 3rd: Jim Hughes.

Flowers: 1st: Ruth Green, 2nd: Jim Hughes, 3rd: Ruth Green.

Scenery/People in nature/Humor in nature: 1st & 2nd place Ruth Green, 3rd place Jim Hughes.

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all entrants.

Thanks to Eric for taking charge of this contest again this year (one of several he has organized), which is always a crowd pleaser.

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Callison Award Presented to Paul Johnsgard

The Charles H. Callison Award, which recognizes outstanding National Audubon Society staff and Chapter volunteers, was presented in May 2008 to Dr. Paul A. Johnsgard of Lincoln. Dr. Johnsgard is well known to ASO and NOU members for his presentations and his many publications about birds and natural areas in our state. His lyrical prose evokes the appeal of our special places.

"This year's recipients are model examples of what it means to make a lifelong commitment to the environment," said National Audubon Society President John Flicker. "As volunteers, our honorees have proven that the actions of committed individuals can change the world."

Dr. Johnsgard, Foundation Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Nebraska, is a world-renowned ornithologist and leader in conservation. His nomination was led by Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center and the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center of Rowe Sanctuary, as well as the local Audubon chapters in Kearney, Lincoln, Omaha and Scottsbluff.

"The citizens of Nebraska and the world have been blessed by Paul's lifelong dedication to drawing attention to the beauty of our state and its amazing bird populations. We are thrilled that his efforts are being recognized in this way," said Marian Langan, Director of Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center.

The text of his nomination stated: "Paul's body of scientific achievement is not why this nomination is being submitted. There are numerous scientists whose work is focused on conservation. What sets Paul apart is his generosity and willingness to help any

where anytime if it will help conservation." The author of over fifty books on ornithology and the natural sciences, he is also a gifted artist and photographer. For decades he has allowed numerous conservation groups free use of his photographs and drawings, allowing them to stretch otherwise limited budgets.

The National Audubon Society gives the Callison Awards biennially to staff members and volunteers selected for criteria including environmental policy achievements, creativity, coalition building, and education and outreach. The awards' namesake, Charlie Callison, Executive Vice President of National Audubon Society from 1960 to 1977, was a leading voice in the creation of Audubon's field operations who expanded and supported the Chapter network.

DeSoto Spring Count May 3

Reported by Jerry Toll

On Saturday, May 3, the day started out cold with strong northwest winds but warmed up for the 17 participants counting in Harrison Co, Iowa, and Washington Co, Nebraska.

The total species count was 115; total individuals - 3,136. Shorebirds numbered 10 species, with a Marbled Godwit the most notable. Twelve warbler species were recorded.

A notable was a Sora. High counts were Blue-

winged Teal 275, Red-winged Blackbird 333, Tree Swallow 205.

The higher than usual number of those participating helped to make the day a success.

West Nile Warning

The heavy rains and standing water have brought with them a worse-than-usual West Nile Virus threat.

We need to take precautions in our yards by regularly (daily) cleaning out birdbaths and other potential mosquito breeding places.

Also, use repellent generously, and be safe!

Current Currents

By Elliott Bedows

Think You're Saving the Planet by Using a Computer Instead of Cutting Down a Tree? Guess Again!

The May 24, 2008, issue of *The Economist* featured two articles which among other things revealed that in the year 2005 the energy required to run the computer-load in the U.S. resulted in more carbon dioxide emissions than the *combined* annual carbon dioxide emissions of the nations of Argentina and the Netherlands. Folks, that is a lot of carbon dioxide emission. And our dependency on our silicon robots is increasing faster than our nation's oil appetite. Did I forget to say I'm writing this article on my PC and will, upon its completion, email it to our newsletter editor. I'm part of the problem too!

We as a society are becoming extremely reliant on computer technology. The independent market firm IDC reports there are about 7,000 computer servers in our country. These add up to the "size of {six soccer fields}" — see Quincy, WA— according to the McKinskey and Uptime Institute. By the year 2020, it is predicted that the carbon footprint left by computer usage will exceed 650 metric tons. Translated into English, this means the amount of predicted carbon dioxide emissions resulting from computer usage will *exceed* the amount produced by the entire domestic aviation industry.

What are we to do? Obviously we need to resort to more energy efficient strategies, but there is more to it than that. We need to change our attitude concerning computer usage. Let me explain.

While industries like avionics at least apologize for their fuel usage, the silicon culture is actually proud of their carbon emissions. Proud to the point that they brag about how many new

Sarpy County Spring Bird Count Results

By Clem Klaphake

The Annual Sarpy County Spring Bird Count was held May 10, 2008. The weather was not the most cooperative, with rain much of the afternoon. However, despite this potential damper, the total outcome of species counted was not down or low.

The total count was 133 species (the 134th was a merganser species—female not clearly seen at Wehrspann Lake). As always, there were high counts (warblers) and low counts (terns and shorebirds).

There were some of the more unexpected warblers, they were Cerulean, Golden-winged and Blue-winged. The Blackburnians, Magnolia, Mourning and Black-throated Green Warblers were a nice addition as well.

As for the low (or zero) counts, there were the Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper and Lesser Yellowlegs as our only shorebird species, and we zeroed out on terns. The Whip-poor-will was a nice and unexpected bird that Neal Ratzlaff's group found at Wehrspann Lake.

This is a count that calendar-wise occurs usually at peak passerine migration time, and the variety of birds seen is often interesting and exciting. We had a young birder, Brian Hula, join the Fontenelle Forest group this year. Judging from his reactions, he was very excited about the number of lifers he saw.

A great thank you goes out to all who participated, and maybe we will see some new faces next year.

Blackburnian Warbler

programs/games, which directly equates to carbon emissions, they generate each year. And as our young populations, from first world through emerging nations, essentially are becoming computer junkies, this only compounds the problem, worldwide.

Again, according to the McKinskey and Uptime Institute, so few people within the industry are even concerned at this point that "on average, one-third of all servers run idle." In fact, to quote the Institute's report, the computer industry standard is "Let's pull the plug and see who calls." This is not exactly a Nobel Prize-winning green statement.

There is good news suggesting that "the industry" is all over this situation and that companies such as Dell are already proposing ways to cut the carbon footprint of computer litter by up to 50%. Unfortunately, there is

also the ugly truth that world Number One computer provider HP plans to have 85 data centers located worldwide by the year 2010. Only eight of these will be located in the U.S., and that means most will be unregulated.

Now factor in this. Internet giants such as Google, Microsoft, Yahoo and others are all vying for their market share. To do so they need mega- actually giga-/tera- servers. And many emerging nations are attempting to compete in this extremely lucrative and relatively recession-proof endeavor.

And, folks, that's a lot of carbon dioxide emissions.

`Nature Deficit Disorder' - Looking for a Cure

On Tuesday, April 22, a meeting was held at the NRD Headquarters, Wehrspann Lake, to search for answers to the problem of children deprived of connections to the natural world. The meeting was chaired by Ken Finch, former Executive Director of the Fontenelle Forest Nature Association.

Mr. Finch stressed the need for children to experience "nature play," which is defined as having three components:

.. right kind of place; unrestricted

.. right activity; unstructured, child-centered

.. right frequency.

A key influence is frequency of daily rhythm in a child's life. Through it a child builds a sense of place, a connection that lasts throughout life. Through stories and testimony of adults, this is known to be the most important influence in forming a lifelong conservation ethic. There is also a good fit with child development: health, social skills, and emotional benefits.

Mr. Finch observed that today children spend 27% of their time with the computer and only 1% outdoors, most of that structured, like soccer. He says that "nature education" in a formal setting, while valuable, is structured and limited in frequency, therefore lacking the freedom of early "nature play" that instills lifelong love and respect for nature in many of its manifestations.

The outdoors is dynamic, always changing, and authentic, not virtual. Nature play lets kids decide where play takes them through observation, discovery and adventure—exhilarating or calm and reflective.

Those attending represented organizations in Omaha and Lincoln. Some presented inventive plans for giving children the kind of opportunities needed. Several persons volunteered to serve on the board of this fledgling organization.

Representing Audubon were Nelli Falzgraf and Laurine Blankenau.

Linda Dennis Recognized for Volunteer Service at Fontenelle Forest

Audubon member Linda Dennis was recognized recently for her volunteer work at the Fontenelle Forest Nature Association.

An article in the April - June issue of *The Leaflet* follows the time she has spent working with birds of prey, beginning with volunteering for Raptor Recovery.

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She later volunteered at Fontenelle as an educator, working with an injured Rough-legged Hawk and teaching proper bird handling. Contact info@nwf.org, 800-822-9919, National Wildlife Federation, 11100 Wildlife Center Dr, Reston VA 20190.

"I feel privileged to be able to work with the birds and love watching the public's reactions to these awe-inspiring animals," said Linda.

Currently Linda works at the Gifford Farm Education Center as a Team Leader and staffs the Neale Woods Nature Center during the weekends it is open in spring and fall.

From 1999-2006, Linda was associated with ASO as a volunteer with the Omaha Raptor Team, bringing the birds to schools, civic organizations, and others.

On the ASO Board, she serves as Director, and alongside Nancy Williams she co-chairs the Program Committee. In the past she held the positions of Recording Secretary and Director.

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Audubon Society

Membership Application

Addresses to Remember

President George W. Bush

The White House, 1600
Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington D.C. 20500-0001

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

Senator Ben Nelson

U.S. Senate, Washington DC
20510; 202-224-6551; fax 202-228-
0012; Lincoln: 402-437-5246;
Omaha 391-3411; Omaha address:
7602 Pacific St, #205, 68114

Senator Chuck Hagel

U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.
20510-2705

Omaha Address: 9900 Nicholas St,
Suite 325,

Omaha 68114

Phone: (202) 224-4224; Fax: (202)
224-5213

Omaha phone: (402) 758-8981

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

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(1st & 2nd Year \$20)

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Plattsmouth NE 68048

PO 3

7XCH

Memorials

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

When sending your 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 phone: (402) 397-9944

,Omaha NE 68103-0542

Representative Jeff Fortenberry

U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC 20515
Phone:
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Lincoln phone: (402) 438-1598

Lincoln Address:

Governor Dave Heineman

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848 Lincoln,
NE 68509

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

Mayor Mike Fahey

Omaha/Douglas Civic Center

1819 Farnam St, Omaha NE 68183

Phone: 444-5000 Hot Line: 444-
5555

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

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

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292-9687**

**Past President Elliott Bedows.....292-
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Scholar..... 551-5045**

Nancy Williams.....291-8580

Jerry Toll..... 453-9239

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Finance Nelli Falzgraf..... ..292-9687

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