

The Meadowlark

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Serving Eastern Nebraska
and Western Iowa

Walking With Penguins

by Clem Klaphake

How many of you know your geography well

enough to point out on a map where the Falkland Islands are located? How many of you remember your history from 1982 and the Falkland Islands War between the United Kingdom and Argentina? Well, on Thursday March 10th you will see and hear about the bird life on the Falkland Islands from Linda and Robert Scarth of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The following is taken from the Scarths' web site. "Photographers are careful observers by inclination and training. Linda and Bob Scarth come from academic backgrounds where these . . . skills were honed. Linda has degrees in child development, education and library and information science. Bob's degrees are in animal breeding, genetics, and statistics. Linda grew up in a family of amateur folk artists who enjoyed photography. Bob discovered his eye for detail. . . as a young college teacher. Their interest and skill. . . evolved to emphasize natural history photography. . ."

The Scarths traveled to the Falkland Islands, off the tip of South America, where they photographed five species of penguins, four of which had chicks. They visited six islands and enjoyed the hospitality of the islanders. They learned about the Falkland War from the locals' perspective and met history buffs, birders and photographers from Europe and North America. Among the rarities they photographed were the endemic Falklands Fritillary Butterfly and Cobb's Wren. You also will enjoy seeing their photos of numerous other birds, such as the Kelp Geese, 'Johnny Rooks', Black-necked Swans, Falkland Skuas, Silvery grebes and other fascinating South Atlantic species.

When traveling for work in a place with good nature and landscape opportunities, the Scarths often added vacation days for photography. Living in

Australia for several years, they spent time in the Outback. Their travel also includes Ecuador, Kenya, Tanzania, Costa Rica, Southeast Alaska, and the Monarch Butterfly Preserves in Mexico. With excellent photographic programs for each of these locations, they do presentations for nature centers, conservation organizations, civic clubs and schools.

Their book, *Deep Nature: Photographs From Iowa*, came out in 2009, accompanied by an essay by John Pearson entitled 'Small Places, Unbounded Spaces'. It includes 80 of the Scarth's images of small members of Iowa's natural world, such as wasps, spiders, butterflies, leafhoppers, beetles, dragonflies as well as birds, forbs, grasses, and fungi.
By Justin Rink

Wehrspann Waterfowl Trip
March 19
This is a program you will not want to miss. So join us for the meeting and program Thursday March 10th at 7:00 p.m. at the Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances St. (1 block south of 45th and Center). A short business meeting will follow the program. Cookies and conversation will close the evening. We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot near the main building.

We welcome all levels of birding skills; non-members are welcome.

Let's Protect the Nebraska Environmental Trust from Legislative Raiding

By Jer Toll

I have been hearing a lot of rumblings from the Nebraska Legislature about how the recession has depleted the state coffers and the challenges they face trying to find enough money to keep the state running. One place our senators are looking for sources of revenue is the Nebraska Environmental Trust. There were no less than three bills and a constitutional amendment introduced to eliminate or greatly reduce the mandated purpose of the Trust.

The Trust began with the agreement in 1993 that if Nebraska started a lottery, the revenues would be split between education and the Environmental Trust. It was voted on by Nebraskans who overwhelmingly passed the amendment. Since then, periodically, legislators have tried to raid the Trust even though it receives bipartisan political support and wide support across Nebraska from diverse groups.

According to an op-ed in the *Omaha World Herald*, an effort in 2004 to safeguard the Trust by a constitutional amendment was again passed by the voters "but even then that didn't stop the raiding. As the support for the latest fund diversion shows, there's a powerful, ongoing temptation at the Capitol to disregard the repeated expressions of the voters' will on this issue."

The Nebraska Environmental Trust has widespread support for good reason.

According to the Trusts' 2010 Annual Report, all 93 counties in Nebraska have received financial support on natural resource projects totaling over \$157 million on over 1,200 projects. The Trust, on average, gets \$2 in matching funds for every \$1 it gives out in grants. Over \$471 million has so far been made available for natural resource projects.

The Board of Trustees has demonstrated their commitment to equitably distribute grants across the state based on population and geography. The grants go to projects as diverse as the needs of Nebraskans. There are small grants to towns for tree planting, grants for NRDs to improve water quality or soil management, grants for recycling, or for grassland habitat improvement, for some examples.

The Trust has been good for birds and bird lovers. In 2008, the Trust joined with the Nebraska Bird

Partnership to fund BEAK, a program to teach Nebraska kids about Nebraska birds. The Trust was instrumental in the purchase of Audubon Nebraska's Spring Creek Prairie and has since aided with expansion and easement efforts around the prairie. Rowe Sanctuary has received three grants for habitat restoration and protection of critical habitat for cranes.

" **LB 229** will take \$7 million per year for the next 11 years from the Environmental Trust and transfer it to the Water Resources Cash Fund. The WRCF was set up to deal with the water compacts with Kansas and other states over allocations of surface water.

" **LB 395** would not allow the five agency directors who currently sit on the Trust's 14-member board to vote (the directors of the Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Control, Game and Parks, Natural Resources and Division of Public Health). The other nine board members are governor appointees, three from each congressional district. The bill will limit the expertise currently made available to the board.

" **LB 229** would limit the Environmental Trust to no more than 10% of its grant funds to be made available for land purchases and conservation easements. Additionally, it would allow only political subdivisions to be eligible for land acquisitions with Trust funds. Under these rules, no charitable organization such as Audubon would be eligible for Trust grants, and habitat protection would be sharply curtailed.

" **LB 51CA** is a constitutional amendment to eliminate the Environmental Trust altogether.

(Thanks to the Wachiska Audubons' newsletter "The Babbling Brook" for a synopsis of the bills.)

"These bills are bad solutions to real problems and should be rejected by the state legislature." Dave Mooter, retired state forester.

Stop the raiding of the Environmental Trust. Voice your opposition to your state senator and write an op-ed or blog.

By Kevin Poague

The National Audubon Society announces the promotion of Marian Langan to the position of Executive Director, Audubon Nebraska; and Vice-President, National Audubon Society. Langan will directly oversee Audubon programs and facilities in Nebraska. She will be responsible for developing and implementing projects across the state. She will also be responsible for fundraising and public relations.

"Audubon Nebraska is committed to increasing its capacity for the important conservation work it does in the state. Nebraska has outstanding natural areas that need continued attention and resources."

"The roots of my conservation interests go back to my days of playing in the river and prairies around Cedar Rapids, Nebraska, as I grew up," stated Langan. "There were many opportunities to get out there and have those same opportunities. I look forward to bringing more Nebraskans together to focus attention on the needs of our native places."

Job Announcement

Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Director

The Center is seeking a new director, who will be responsible for all aspects of management and fundraising. Contact job announcement at audubon.org/jobs. For more information, contact jobs@audubon.org.

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February 19 Field Trip Results

Justin Rink led a trip to Forest Lawn Cemetery where 12 birders found 24 species. He reports:

"Highlights were one Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse, a handful of Pine Siskins and a couple of Red-
