

April 2006

Volume 35 Issue 4

Managing to Survive

Zoos are complicated places these days. Their origins extend back thousands of years to ancient Egypt, where wild animals were caged and worshipped. In the time of Aristotle, wealthy men kept private menageries as a sign of their wealth and power. Eventually zoos moved into the urban environment and became popular places of entertainment. But by the late 19th century, at least one zoo, the London Zoological Garden, was starting to characterize its mission as science rather than "vulgar entertainment."

The 20th century brought many changes to the concept of a zoo. In Germany cages began to be replaced by moats, artificial shrubbery, landscaping and walkways to give both animals and people a more natural experience. In the Bronx, conservation became the watchword, and bison bred at the zoo were successfully reintroduced into the wild. In the 1980's and 1990's, zoos began to be thought of as "arks" or places of sanctuary for endangered animals so that species could be saved and bred in zoos until their habitat was restored. Effective captive breeding programs were considered critical to the survival of many endangered species.

By Nancy Leonard

But many species don't breed in captivity or may not learn essential parenting techniques. In a small, captive group, lack of genetic diversity is potentially devastating for a species. Inbreeding in a species weakens the immune system, among other things.

Our April speaker, Naida Loskutoff, is intimately familiar with these issues. She is a Ph.D. in charge of Reproductive Physiology at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. She oversees programs involving elephants, gorillas, tigers, Tasmanian devils and others. The focus of her work is to develop assisted reproductive technology in wildlife, especially for long-term genetic management and prevention of infectious diseases.

Please join us Thursday, April 13, for what promises to be a most interesting program. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances (one block south of 45th & Center). Visitors are welcome. Following the program are a short business meeting and a social time.

Birding Potpourri on April 29

**By Clem
Klaphake**

Because most of the ASO field trip participants are familiar with local birding haunts in the metro area, I like

We will leave from the southeast corner of the Southroads Shopping Mall parking lot in Bellevue at 7:30 a.m.

to schedule some of these trips to lesser known areas. Therefore, on Saturday, April 29, I will lead an ASO field trip to southeast Nebraska and southwest Iowa.

Depending on the pre-trip scouting reports and weather (and recent precipitation) conditions, we will head south on Hwy 75 and make a few stops on the way to Nebraska City in Otoe County, including Arbor Lodge, which requires a Nebraska State Park sticker. In the afternoon, we will head to Riverton, Iowa, to look for shorebirds. On last year's April trip, a few of us stopped off there after birding Indian Cave State Park and found thousands of shorebirds as well as Peregrine Falcons, waders, and lots of late waterfowl.

Carpooling is encouraged to reduce the number of vehicles in a caravan. Bring drinks, snacks, and a lunch because we are likely to be eating in a park and not be near a restaurant.

Spring Banquet May 11

Our Spring Banquet traditionally held on the second Thursday in May, this year the 11th, will take place at Johnny's Cafe on L Street. All members, their spouses and guests, are welcome. The evening will include speakers, display of photo contest entries and winners, and presentation of a service award.

To make a reservation, fill out and return the form on page 7. Deadline: May 5.

Current Currents

Is Migration Advancing, and Why?

Our feathered friends are beginning to return for their 2006 breeding season, and it is now abundantly apparent that the dates certain, but admittedly not all, species are first seen one to two weeks earlier than the same records of even ten years ago. Why?

The ultimate cause of the migration advancement is the general climatic warming, which has not only led to earlier migration in many instances, but has also appeared to alter the migration routes and breeding ranges of other species.

Because global warming has been associated with changes in rain patterns as well as food availability, the general warming pattern that has been going on for nearly a decade and which has been most apparent in the past five years has

By Elliott Bedows

I have been told by one of my British friends that in the UK, wrens (*Troglodytes*), like our Carolina Wren populations, are being found further north and that their Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominicus*) populations are being seen 20 days earlier, on average, than they were 20 years ago. (Thanks to Bill Hughy of Dorset, UK, for that information.) Bottom line: it doesn't always take a hurricane barrage or a drought to demonstrate that global warming is occurring. Our birds are singing the message to us.

How Do Some Birds Get Named?

We just came home from a trip to the rainforests of southeast Venezuela where we enjoyed an abundance of bird sightings, and enjoyed to a far lesser extent excessive heat and rain. I mean,

caused certain insect populations to advance. For example, chiggers, those nasty little biting insects that live in grass and leave you with a bite that itches like crazy, used to be restricted to the south. But as a number of us discovered during a hike near Fontenelle Forest last summer, they now occur locally in abundance. (Plants not normally found this far north are also advancing, and certain species that enjoy colder climates are retreating.)

It appears that certain insectivorous birds are being sighted earlier, or with greater frequency, than a decade ago because their food sources are advancing northward and/or hatching that much earlier. As an added benefit, these "early birds" are able to avoid predation by other migrating species such as Sharp-shinned Hawks whose timetables have not yet adjusted, giving the early migrants an edge up on finding territories in which to breed. In Nebraska, species once rarely seen are now becoming regular breeders. A good example of this is the beautiful Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, which only uncommonly was spotted north of southern Kansas ten years ago, but which now breeds in the Omaha area. I saw two pairs in Omaha last year, and others were reported statewide. The Blue Grosbeak, another beauty formerly restricted to more southern climates, also has been found in far greater numbers throughout Nebraska, including the Omaha area, in recent years. White-winged Doves of the arid southwest are beginning to make their way into our state in numbers, as well.

it's their dry season, and they're getting more rain each week than we'll see in a year. And it's just rain: no winds, thunderstorms or violent weather of any kind. Please ship some of that north! But as I was starting to say before I digressed, one of the species we saw was the locally common Yellow-chinned Spinetail. Now I have seen hundreds of Yellow-chinned Spinetails in my nine trips to South America, but only once and at exceptionally close range, could I ever detect a yellow chin on this bird. Clearly, a case of naming a bird for an obscure field mark. So I began to think about some of our local birds that are also named for features rarely seen. Topping my list were Orange-crowned (shouldn't that be American Green?) Warbler and Ring-necked (shouldn't that be Ring-billed?) Duck. What are your favorite examples?

When the Pleiades and the wind in the grass are no longer a part of the human spirit. . . man becomes, as it were, a kind of cosmic outlaw, having neither the completeness and integrity of the animal nor the birthright of a true humanity.

Henry Beston

The Outermost House



Conservation Day at the Zoo

We need volunteers to help at the Henry Doorly Zoo on Saturday, April 22, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

We will be staffing a table to help observe Conservation Day. Patti Albright is

chair of this event. Please call her at 323-1966 if you can help.

This is ASO's first appearance at the Zoo, and as you know, the Zoo has plenty of attractions to take in once you're there Your presence would be most welcome.

Safari Park Event

Needs Volunteers

International Migratory Bird Day will be celebrated at Safari Park on Saturday, May 20.

If you can help staff a booth, please contact Laurine Blankenau, 451-3647. Help is needed from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Attention All Spring Birders

The annual Sarpy County Bird Count will be held on Saturday, May 13 (not Mother's Day). Half or all-day help is always appreciated. Anyone interested in participating should contact Clem Klaphake at 292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net.

DeSoto Spring Count - May 6

The DeSoto Spring Bird Count will be held on Saturday, May 6, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Participants need to meet at the Refuge Administration Office. Contact Bob Barry at 642-5404, bob_barry@fws.gov, or just come out and join the rest of the group.

You may count half or all day. Whatever help you can give will be appreciated.

The Audubon Society of Omaha extends its sympathy to Erma Graves upon the death of her husband, Don Graves.

For several years, Don held the positions of Director and Program Chair. Through the years, he served on numerous

Entries Wanted for Photo Contest

By Eric Scholar

Entries are being sought for ASO's photo contest to be displayed at the Spring Banquet Thursday, May 11.

Contest categories are Birds, Wildflowers, Animals, Insects, Scenics/people in Nature/Humor in Nature.

Photos must be from nature—zoo shots or photos of pets are excluded. Entries are limited to two per person per category, may range in size from 5x7 to 16x20 and must be matted or framed.

First and Second prizes will be awarded in each category along with Best of Show. Most Popular will be voted on by those attending the banquet.

Entries must be received by Wednesday, May 3. To make arrangements for delivering your photos, please phone Eric Scholar at 551-5045.

I encourage our photographers to enter the contest to make it most enjoyable.

Earth Day at Elmwood Park - April 22

Omaha will celebrate Earth Day on Saturday, April 22, at Elmwood Park. (If it rains, it will be held indoors at Lewis & Clark Middle School, 6901 Burt Street.

Many environmental groups will be on hand to distribute information concerning environmental issues. Children's activities will be provided, as well as live bands.

The Audubon Society of Omaha will sponsor a booth in order to distribute information relative to birds and

other

conservation. If you would be interested in helping to staff the Audubon booth, please contact Jackie Scholar at 551-5045.

When Trash is Good

Beginning January 2 of this year, Omaha set out into a new era of recycling, which is known as "single-stream" processing.

The new processing contract to sort and market Omaha's curbside recyclables was awarded to Firststar Fiber, calling for the company to sort the commingled recyclables and pay the city a sliding market rate based on the value of old newspapers.

CEO Dale Gubbels gives both his staff and the 122,000 participating households high marks. "I am really proud of how our team stepped up to the plate to prepare for the contract and how they have performed during these first few weeks since we began receiving material, and I am especially thankful how Omahans have responded to changes in the program," Gubbels said.

The company sorts the commingled recyclables consisting of virtually all forms of paper, such as newspaper, cardboard, magazines, bulk mail and stationery. The materials need not be kept separate, and as Gubbels explained, this is one of the new requirements that the city and First Fiber expect will result in more materials being diverted from the landfill.

As we know, previously we were asked

**By Laurine Blankenau and
Kathy Schwery**

"Single stream processing systems have been around for several years. {but} it is only within the last few years, thanks to the combination of increasingly robust markets and the ongoing efficiencies of the equipment, that vendors like Firststar Fiber within cities the size of Omaha could seriously embrace this approach."

Omaha's decision to discontinue taking glass at the curb made bidding for the contract more attractive. Gubbels states that "broken glass contaminates the more valuable materials set out for recycling. We have heard of otherwise recyclable materials that are rejected or downgraded by end markets because they contain too much glass, which can be a dangerous and abrasive materials that affects worker safety and wears out expensive equipment."

If at first some of us were disgruntled at no longer being able to recycle glass, it is obvious that the issue of safety is paramount. And, for your convenience, here are the addresses of six locations for glass drop-off sites

Scrap Central, 8518 Blondo
Firststar Fiber, 10330 I Street

River City Recycling, 6404 So 60th

to keep newspapers separate from other paper, to cut cardboard into pieces no larger than two feet square and stack it underneath the bin by the curb. Cutting or tearing up the cardboard undoubtedly meant too much going into the landfill.

Gubbels went on to say that "A lot of people. . . found the requirements to be more trouble than it was worth. . . Other communities that have switched to these more convenient requirements have had double digit increases in participation and recovery of more materials." In Kansas City, this new approach saves the city about \$800,00 a year on its collection contract with Deffenbaugh Disposal because the company no longer needs to sort material at the curb.

The reduced preparation required of residents and the savings in trucking came with added costs in processing, Gubbels said. Firststar Fiber added a 17,000 square-foot-building expansion and installed a sophisticated sorting system designed to sort the cardboard, newspaper, remaining paper and the containers into separate streams so that they can be marketed to end users.

Street
CARE, 1011 N. 45th Street
HyVee, 96th & Q Streets
Weyerhaeuser, 7200 No. 16th Street.
Single stream recycling is progress, but Omaha has a way to travel for an impressive record of recycling. Our present rate of participation is a dismal about 10% and below that of many other cities. The simpler form of residential recycling should be an incentive to carry items out to the garage and drop them in the green bins, but that hasn't happened as yet. The City is now paid by the haulers, funds which are to be used to promote participation. Less materials in the landfill results in lower costs to the city. The City needs to do its part to prod more residents to recycle.

Those of us who care about the environment need to encourage others to recycle and do what we can to initiate recycling programs where we work. In some states, recycling is mandatory for businesses, hospitals and schools. Omaha and the entire state of Nebraska need to become that progressive.

Art Contest A Great Success

By Jackie Scholar

The Audubon Society of Omaha Student Art Contest was held on Saturday, March 25, on the Bellevue University Campus, Bellevue. It was a great success. On display were 194 pieces of student art. Thirty students earned an award of Excellence and 44 earned a Merit Award for their artwork depicting a Midwestern bird in its native habitat. Students

Many individuals helped make this event a success. Our thanks and appreciation for their work on the Art Contest go to committee members Jo Bartikoski, Laurine Blankenau, Nelli Falzgraf, Nancy Leonard, Kathy Schwery, and Jackie Scholar. Others whose help was greatly appreciated were Karlene Kingery, Eunice Levisay, Jim

(kindergarten through grade 12) from over 20 schools in the Omaha, Bellevue, Elkhorn, Boys Town, Springfield and Blair School Districts participated in the contest.

A crowd of over 200 parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends attended the event which culminated in an awards ceremony hosted by Deborah Ward of Action 3 News.

One of the art teachers, Dave Manriquez of Bancroft Academy, was honored for his support of our Art Contest over the years and for his mentoring of numerous students in the painting of birds using many kinds of media.

On hand was Jenny Henricksen of the Omaha Raptor Team with "Zorro" and "Fred."

McLochlin, Eric Scholar and Urban Leonard.

Thanks also to this year's judges Roland Barth, Duane Bright, John Prouty, Clark Pflanz, Susan Anderson, and Don Westling.

We are grateful to The Bookworm, Backyard Birds, and Wild Birds Unlimited for their support of the contest:

A heartfelt thanks to Bellevue University, which donated the use of their facilities, their Public Relations Department, and other support staff to make the contest possible and successful.

Editor's Note: Most of the credit for the outstanding success of the Contest goes to Jackie Scholar for her planning and organizing as well as overseeing the many details of the event. Thank you, Jackie!

Surveyors of Migratory Bird Habitats Needed

A search is being conducted for qualified bird surveyors/biologists/ecologists to assist with a project in Nebraska to protect migrating and nesting birds.

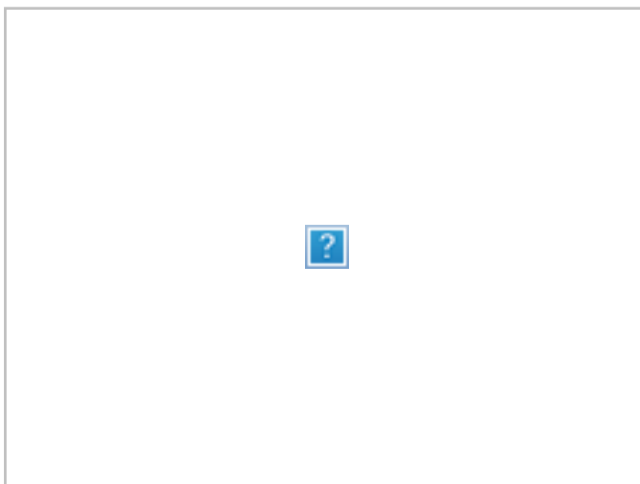
In accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, construction projects which would disrupt nesting mandate that a reliable survey be made of the birds to be affected, e.g. those nesting on bridge girders or in woodland habitat, with documentation supplied.

A partial list of the desired qualifications for surveyors include a degree in biological science, ecology, natural resource management or related discipline appropriate to the position. Persons with field experience and some education in the above disciplines may be accepted and are also urged to apply.

Surveyors are expected to possess special knowledge of pertinent ecosystems, especially those of the Great Plains, particularly Nebraska. Evidence of experience in the field

NE 68801, Phone (308) 382-6468, Ext. 22; Fax (308) 384-8835.

Or contact Kelly Rezac, Coordinator of the Nebraska partnership for All-Bird Conservation at Nebraska Game & Parks, PO Box 30370, Lincoln NE 68503-0370; (402) 471-5363; www.nebraskabirds.org; kelly.rezac@ngpc.ne.gov



would be required.

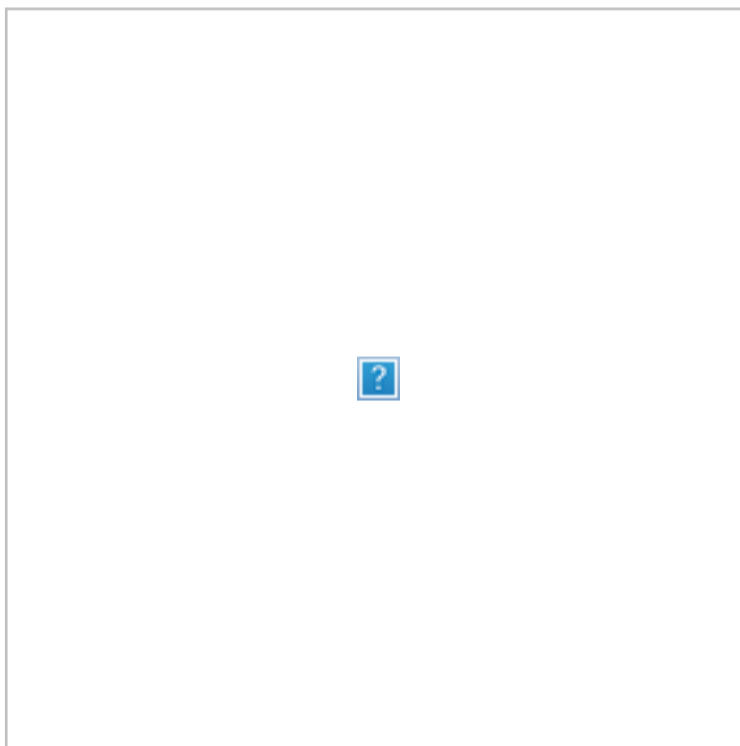
For a complete list of Recommended Bird Surveyor Qualifications and/or to apply, contact Jeff Runge of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 203 W Second St, Grand Island

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Washington County Development Opposed

By Laurine Blankenau

A 300-acre site of rolling hills is situated in Washington County a short distance west of Ft. Calhoun adjacent to a waterway, Long Creek, that is habitat for fish and other wildlife. A Great Blue Heron rookery is on the site, and Bald Eagles soar overhead. The water quality of the Creek is good, and the woods are home to much birdlife other than the herons.



But now an Omaha developer has plans to build a subdivision on this site, with 79 homes on 2-acre lots. The Washington County Planner and Board have determined that the southeast section of the County is designated for "growth," which has resulted in a large number of subdivisions. Most members of the Board favor the development, while a large group of Washington County citizens opposes it, citing destruction of the environment and the affect on county roads and need. According to

meeting,
please
contact
Laurine
Blankenau,
451-3647,
to be
informed of
the time and
to arrange
for

an article in the Washington County Tribune & Enterprise, by Jim Brazda, the NRD has said that the new rural water system could provide water to only 57 of the 79 lots proposed.

carpooling. Also, watch for updated information in the May newsletter.

Our neighbors' concerns are our concerns regarding this issue. More of course is involved than birds and wildlife. A major point is sprawl that wrecks the health of an area, destroys the landscape, reduces the desirability of neighboring areas, and adds to stress on water and air.

Please call Laurine if you wish more information.

Neither the site's neighbors nor other environmentalists wish to see still more subdivisions taking open areas, nesting sites for birds, and generally turning surrounding areas into exurban sprawl. Concerned Washington County citizens are asking ASO members to send letters to the Washington County Board stating their opposition to the development. Send to Washington County Board of Supervisors, County Clerk, P. O. Box 466, Blair NE 68008. We are also asked to attend a meeting of the Board on Tuesday, May 23. If any of you are

**Russell
Smith**

meeting, please contact Laurine Blankenau, 451-3647, to be informed of the time and to arrange for carpooling. Also, watch for updated information in the May newsletter.

Our neighbors' concerns are our concerns regarding this issue. More of course is involved than birds and wildlife. A major point is sprawl that wrecks the health of an area, destroys the landscape, reduces the desirability of neighboring areas, and adds to

willing to attend the

stress on water and air.

Please call Laurine if you wish more information.

Bequests

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

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



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 NE 68103-0542

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

Audubon Society

Membership Application

The *Audubon Magazine**(see below, chapter-only membership) and your membership card will be sent to this address:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Introductory Membership

National Audubon & Local Chapter

(1st & 2nd Year \$20)

Make check payable to National Audubon Society

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

Chapter-only Membership: \$15

(No National Audubon Magazine)

Omaha phone: (402) 758-8981

Make check payable to Audubon Society of Omaha

Representative Lee Terry

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha

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

19612 Ridgeway Road

Plattsmouth NE 68048

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

PO 3

Omaha phone: (402) 397-9944

7XCH

Representative Jeff Fortenberry

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

Phone: (202) 225-4806

Lincoln phone: (402) 438-1598

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

Banquet Reservation

**Johnny's
Steakhouse on L
Street**

**Thursday, May 11 Cash Bar 6:00 p.m.
Dinner 7:00 p.m.**

Name

Address _____

**Number
and
Street**

City

Zip

Enclosed is \$_____ for _____ persons

The cost is \$20.00 per person. Make check payable to ASO and mail to Laurine Blankenau, 3808 Grebe, Omaha 68112.

Reservations must be received by May 5.

City

Zip

**Audubon Society of Omaha, Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3542, Omaha
68103-05**

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

Elected Officers:

President Elliott Bedows....292-5017

**1st Vice President Jackie
Scholar.....551-5045**

**2nd Vice President Laurine
Blankenau.....451-3647**

Treasurer Patty Albright.....323-1966

**Past President Nelli Falzgraf.....292-
9687**

**Recording Secretary Linda
Dennis.....733-6548**

Corresponding

Standing Committee Chairpersons, cont.

Natural Areas Mgt. Eric Scholar.....551-5045

**Omaha Raptor Team Jenny Henricksen.....895-
5487**

Program Nancy Leonard.....330-3888

Publication Laurine Blankenau.....451-3647

Publicity Jackie Scholar.....551-5045

Other Activities:

**Bird Seed Sale Co-Chairs Kathleen Rose..... 292-
8912**

Carol Rasmussen.....731-3939

Secretary Pauline Dickey.....932-8205 Speakers Bureau Eunice Levisay.....393-0545

**Elected Directors Jenny
Henricksen.....895-5487**

Mace Hack.....934-5040

Mark Armstrong.....292-9770

Urban Lehner.....330-3888

**Sharon Draper.....572-4026 Tad
Leeper.....593-8508**

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Education Brian Jensen.....333-6375

**Field Trip Clem Klaphake.....292-
2276**

Finance Nelli Falzgraf.....292-9687

**Fund Raising Mace Hack.....934-
5040**

**Hospitality DwanDean Leach.....346-
5769**

**Membership Kathy Schwery.....296-
4788**

Historian Kathleen Rose.....292-8912

Birdathon Chair Bechara Embaid,,,,,965-9598

ASO State Board Rep. Mace Hack.....934-5040

NAS Board Member Ione Werthman..... 493-0373

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may be accessed on our web site,
<http://audubon-omaha.org>

Send address changes to Kathy
Schwery, 19612 Ridgeway Road,
Plattsmouth NE 68048.

Audubon Society of Omaha

P. O. Box 3542

Omaha NE 68103--0542

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Organization**

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NEBRASKA**

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**One swallow does not make a summer,
but one skein of geese, cleaving the
murk of a March thaw, is the spring.**

Aldo Leopold
