

The Meadowlark

The Audubon Society of Omaha is dedicated to the active promotion of environmental awareness to our community through education, conservation and enjoyment of our natural heritage, especially birds.



November/December 2016
Volume 45, Issue 7

ASO is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, serving eastern Nebraska and western Iowa.

REMINDER: NO PROGRAM IN DECEMBER

True to our tradition, we will not have a program in December. Parties, family, shopping, and maybe even bad weather can be distractions in the busy season.

See you in January!

Dr. Jeremy White is ASO's Guest Presenter at the November 10th Meeting

By Alex Wiles

Join us in welcoming Dr. Jeremy White as he presents on the spread of the fungal disease, white-nose syndrome, and its impact on North American bat populations, especially the

federally threatened Northern Long-eared Myotis. Dr. White is a professor of Biology at University of Nebraska, Omaha, and has been active in the field of bat research throughout the state.

The presentation will be held on Thursday, November 10th, at 7 p.m. - Weitz Community Engagement Center, room 201, on the UNO Dodge campus. Non-members are welcome and we encourage you to bring friends to our meetings.

The Community Engagement Center is very easy to find, and we have free parking. Using the frontage road parallel to Dodge St., turn into the northwest corner of the parking lot east of the library. Stop at the "guard house" and tell her/him that you are attending the Audubon Society meeting. Then find a convenient parking place and walk south to the building just beyond the bell tower. Our meeting room is on the second floor. You can take the stairs to the right or the elevator ahead to the left. The meeting room is spacious and comfortable – no folding chairs!



Bat Wing

Alex Wiles

Field Notes from the President: By Matt Miller

Hello again, fellow Audubon Society of Omaha members. My focus for the President's Field notes is twofold: 1) ASO/Fontenelle Forest Hilltop trail restoration project and 2) Importance of Partnerships in Conservation.

The Audubon Society of Omaha was approached last spring before our board's summer break by the Fontenelle Forest Conservation Department to partner on a hilltop savanna restoration project. This project was on a 10-acre degraded hilltop savanna at Neale Woods in North Omaha along what is known as Hilltop Trail on the far west end of the property. Autumn Olive, Honeysuckle, Tree of Heaven, and Smooth Brome are just some of the invasive species that have covered this area. With this many invasive species, this area had little-to-no wildlife or ecological benefits to the property, essentially becoming an eyesore to hikers and rangers at Fontenelle. Through a multi-staged process, contractors, Fontenelle Forest, and hopefully, ASO volunteers, will eventually return this 10-acre plot of land to a healthier state.

The first step in reconstructing this savanna was hiring a contractor to clear the majority of the invasive brush and trees, essentially creating a blank canvas. Wes Atkins of Hickory Ridge Forestry did an amazing job, giving the Fontenelle Forest work staff room to get their tractor in to fill and kill off the Smooth Brome. After the seed bed is formed, ASO volunteers will have the opportunity to partner with Fontenelle Forest staff to plant

plugs and toss seed with a mix of savanna and prairie plants. The final step will be to create signs for the interpretive birding/restoration trail that will include the new restored site on Hilltop trail at Neale Woods.

The ASO board and Fontenelle Forest are extremely excited about the restoration of the land and the possibilities this trail will give both organizations. Youth/adult birding hikes, seed collection days, and education programs are all possibilities, hopefully creating more opportunities for future projects between both organizations!

The Hilltop Restoration project partnered between ASO and Fontenelle Forest shows the importance of such partnerships in environmental conservation. In my young career I am learning quickly that in the environmental world, partnerships are crucial. Whether it's through grants, volunteerism, or resource sharing, like-minded organizations can increase work capacity and provide support in a variety of forums.

From my two years of experience on the board, I know that ASO members should be proud of our organization's

active role in the environmental community. ASO's donations to the Nebraska Land Trust, Fontenelle Forest, Vincent Bluff Preserve, Boys Scouts, to name just a few quick examples, shows the wide-reaching scope of the Audubon Society of Omaha when it comes to partnering to improve habitats in Nebraska and Western Iowa.

As our organization continues to adapt to changing times, I ask you the members of this powerful organization to look for opportunities to volunteer not just with ASO projects but also to get involved with other environmental organizations. Fontenelle Forest, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Hitchcock Nature Center, Green Bellevue – these are just a few places with projects where volunteers can help.

Whether you are helping clean up trash in a natural area, killing invasive species, donating funds to various projects, or helping with a prescribed fire, it says that organizational partnerships are the blood that helps the heart beat in the environmental community!

*Happy Birding and
Yours in Conservation,
Matt Miller*

***“There is delight in the hardy life of the open...
Apart from this, yet mingled with it, is the strong
attraction of places, of the large tropic moons, and the
splendor of the new stars...the awful glory of sunrise
and sunset in the wide waste spaces of the earth,
unworn of man, and changed only by the slow
change of the ages through time everlasting.”***

Theodore Roosevelt, African Game Trails

Area Lakes Are Destination of the November Field Trip

by Clem Klaphake

For the Saturday, November 12, ASO field trip we will be visiting area lakes to see what birds

may have arrived from the north. Should the weather be such that the lakes are frozen

over, we will go to plan 'B' after meeting at the same starting location listed below.



Hilltop Savanna at Neale Woods overgrown with invasive species before restoration project began.

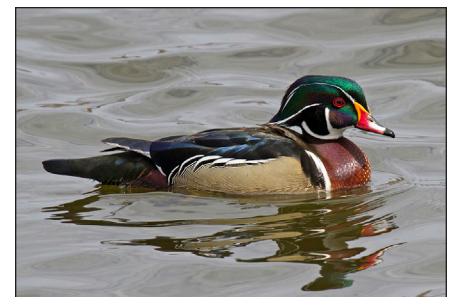


Hilltop Savanna at Neale Woods after invasive species had been removed.

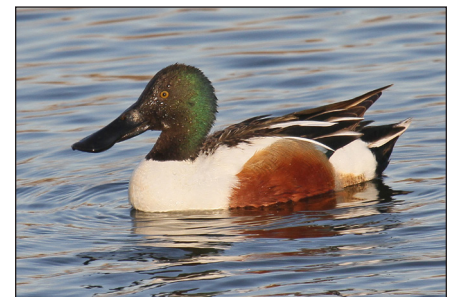
Photos by John Preister



Northern Pintail Phil Swanson



Wood Duck Phil Swanson



Northern Shoveler Phil Swanson

We will first meet in Sarpy County at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot on the east side of Walnut Creek Lake near Papillion. That location is south of State Highway 370 on 96th Street. After birding there we will go on to Prairie Queen Recreation area and then Wehrspann Lake. Depending on what we are seeing, and/or what others have been reporting locally, we may check out some of the Omaha lakes.

For more information contact Clem Klaphake at: 402-292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net

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Would you like to benefit Audubon Society of Omaha while shopping on Amazon? AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you, using your existing Amazon.com account.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the same low prices and convenient shopping as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to Audubon Omaha.

Before you begin shopping on your first visit to AmazonSmile, you can select Audubon Society of Omaha as your designated charitable organization. Amazon will remember your selection, after which a donation of 0.5% will be made of the price of all of your eligible purchases. Donations made by the AmazonSmile Foundation are not tax deductible.

The Audubon Society of Omaha thanks you for your continued support.

Omaha Area Christmas Bird Count

The 117th running of the Omaha national/international Christmas Bird Count will be held on December 17, 2016. It is held in Bellevue within a 15 mile diameter circle centered on the Base Lake east of Offut AFB. The circle is divided into quadrants, two on the Nebraska side and two on the Iowa side. There are four area captains and as many volunteers as possible to give a good coverage to the area. Birders of all levels are welcome. New birders will be put with experienced counters.

Please consider joining this year's CBC. You can count a half or full day with vigorous, gentle

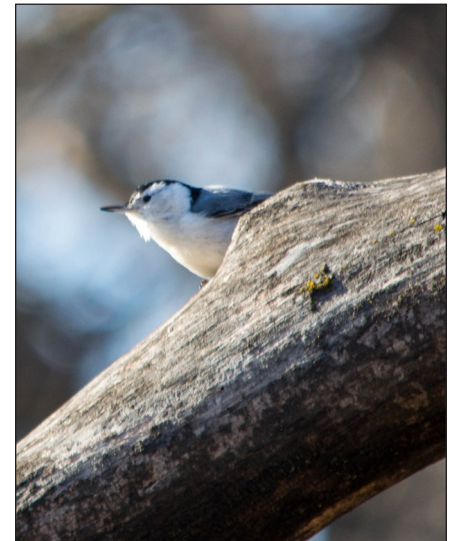
hiking or mostly car birding. The count begins between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. depending on quadrant assignment. A compilation potluck will be held at 5 p.m. at Betty Grenon's home.

If you are new to the count and wish to volunteer please contact Betty Grenon, Omaha CBC Compiler, 402-731-2383 or Grenon925@aol.com



Cardinal

Alex Wiles



Nuthatch

Alex Wiles

DeSoto Christmas Bird Count

The DeSoto CBC is scheduled for Friday, December 30. If you wish to participate contact Jerry Toll at geritol48@cox.net or 402-312-1635

OMAHA YOUTH BIRDING GROUP

Sunday, November 13th, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Come along on a waterfowl search at a city reservoir.

Where we go will depend on what and where birds are being seen at that time.

Saturday, December 17th, 9:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

We will participate in the Omaha Area Christmas Bird Count.

CONTACT TISHA JOHNSON AT 402-885-0990 WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR TO RSVP FOR THE FIELD TRIPS LISTED ABOVE.

Addresses to Remember

President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500-0001, Comments: 202-456-1111

Senator Deb Fischer, U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510; Phone: 202-224-6551; Fax: 202-228-1325; Lincoln Phone: 402-441-4600; Omaha Phone: 402-391-3411; Omaha Address: 11819 Miracle Drive 68154

Senator Ben Sasse, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; Phone: 202-224-4224; Lincoln Phone: 402-476-1400

Representative Brad Ashford, U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Phone: 202-225-4155

Representative Jeff Fortenberry, House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515, Phone: 202-225-4806; Lincoln Phone: 402-438-1598

Governor Pete Ricketts, Capitol Bldg, Lincoln, NE 68509; Phone: 402-471-2244

Mayor Jean Stothert, Omaha/Douglas Civic Center 1819 Farnam St., Omaha NE 68183, Phone: 402-444-5000 Hot Line: 402-444-5555

Lincoln Capitol Switchboard: 402-471-2311

Washington Capitol Switchboard

Senate: 202-224-3121; **House:** 202-225-3121

Bequests

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

Memorials

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

DONATE DIRECTLY FROM IRA, TAX-FREE

IRA owners age 70-1/2 or older are able to make a direct transfer of a distribution from their IRA trustee to a qualified charity, up to 100,000 annually. This amount is not taxable and may be excluded from the IRA owner's taxable income. If this is done, no additional tax deduction is available for these funds. Contact 402-505-9494 for more information. (Be sure to discuss with your professional tax preparer)



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

Memberships

For membership in the National Audubon Society (which automatically includes membership in the Audubon Society of Omaha), go to Audubon.org and select "Join." The drop down menu will allow you to choose "Become a member" or "Renew." The membership fee is \$20. You will receive the Audubon magazine and our local newsletter, the Meadowlark.

If you do not wish to belong to the National Audubon Society but would like to join only our local chapter, please fill out the information below and send it, along with a check for \$20 made out to the Audubon Society of Omaha, to the following address:

Audubon Society of Omaha
19612 Ridgeway Road
Plattsmouth, NE 68048

With membership in the Audubon Society of Omaha, you will receive our local newsletter, *The Meadowlark*.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Audubon Society of Omaha
P.O. Box 3542
Omaha NE 68103-3542

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

Phone: 402-451-3647 – omahaaudubon.org

Office: 1941 S. 42nd St., Omaha NE 68105

Elected Officers:

President Matt Miller – 402-681-4625
1st Vice President Laurine Blankenau – 402-451-3647
2nd Vice President Tisha Johnson – 402-885-0990
Past President Tad Leeper – 402-670-5919
Treasurer Betty Fullerton – 402-493-4362
Recording Sec’y Linda Dennis – 402-218-5447
Corres. Sec’y Kathleen Crawford-Rose – 402-292-8912

Elected Directors:

Bob Wells – 402-393-4683
Helen Bartee – 402-657-3845
Sarah Miller – 402-980-9678
Alex Wiles – 559-349-7359
Shannon Engberg – 402-598-2127
Galyn Langer – 402-595-8543

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation Bob Fuchs – 402-553-8242
Education Clem Klaphake – 402-292-2276
Field Trip Clem Klaphake – 402-292-2276
Finance Nelli Falzgraf – 402-292-9687
Membership Kathy Schwery – 402-296-4788
Natural Areas Management Glenn Pollock – 402-571-6230

Program – Alex Wiles 559-349-7359
Publication Helen Bartee – 402-657-3845
Publicity Jackie Scholar – 402-551-5045

Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Chairs
Kathleen Crawford-Rose – 402-292-8912
Carol Rasmussen – 402-731-3939
Art Contest Chairs
Jackie Scholar – 402-551-5045
Virginia Stauffer – 402-933-6063
Historian – Eric Scholar – 402-551-5045
Exec. Dir., Audubon Nebr. – Marian Langan – 402-797-2301
ASO Administrator – Stacey Coury – 402-210-3102
NAS Board Member – Michele Crist – 208-863-1918
Pan-Flyway Director – Karim al-Khafaji

Six issues of *The Meadowlark* are published annually:
January - February, March - April, May - June, July -
August, September - October, November - December.
The newsletter may be accessed on our website,
omahaaudubon.org

Send address changes to: Kathy Schwery, 19612
Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth NE 68048, or
email: djschw@windstream.net.