

April 2005
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ASO is a Chapter

*of the National Audubon
Society*

*Serving Eastern Nebraska
and Western Iowa*

April 30th Field Trip to Indian Cave State Park

Dreams of Africa: The Landscapes and Wildlife of East Africa

By Clem Klaphake

By Nancy Leonard

Do you want to go birding in the Loess Hills of southeastern Nebraska? Come join us on the ASO field trip to Indian Cave State Park (ICSP) on Saturday, April 30.

This is usually an exciting time of the year to observe new spring passerine migrants heading north. Some of the birds we saw on the last trip here in 2003 were Northern Parula, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-throated Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Indigo Bunting and Broadwing Hawk, to name a few. There always is the possibility of seeing a Pileated Woodpecker in this park. Numerous Zebra Swallowtail butterflies were also observed.

Ross Silcock has agreed to be our host and will meet us at the park. He spends many hours every year birding in ICSP and is quite familiar with the area.

We will meet in the southeast corner of the Southroads Shopping Mall in Bellevue (near the large electric power pole) at 7:00 a.m. (the early birder sees the most birds). Car pooling should be considered because it is at least an hour's drive to the park.

Bring a lunch and drink with you. There are no restaurants nearby. If it has rained, you may want to bring waterproof footwear because we will be doing some trail hiking. Hope to see a number of you eager spring birders join us for this trip.

Sarpy County Bird Count May 8

The Sarpy County Spring Count will be held Sunday, May 8 (Mother's Day), rain or shine. Emphasis is on counting species and less on numbers of each species. The Count's four areas are Fontenelle Forest; Lake Manawa; Glenwood, Iowa; and Schramm Park. Fontenelle and Schramm will be mostly walking; others more driving.

Counters can help for a half day or all day. Anyone interested in participating should contact Clem Klaphake (292-2276) or ckavian@cox.net.

Africa has long been the place of dreams. This continent of more than 30 million square kilometers is home to the world's largest land mammal, the elephant; more than 2,000 species of birds; the world's tallest mammal, the giraffe; and the world's fastest mammal, the cheetah. Explorers throughout history have been drawn there in search of fantastic, unknown animals and plants, forgotten civilizations, and the origins of humanity.

In recent decades, emphasis has been on Africa's vulnerable environment and its endangered, rare and declining species. Our program will focus on East Africa, particularly Kenya and northern Tanzania. Mace Hack, Director, ASO Board, spent two years studying the two species of zebra found in east Africa—the abundant plains zebra and the endangered Grevy's zebra. We will travel with Mace through northern Kenya, the Laikipia Plateau, Mount Kilimanjaro and the Ngorongoro Crater as we range from semiarid bush to

lush tropical forests and savannahs to cold highland grasslands.

After graduating from Princeton, Mace headed to Africa, living alone in a tent on the floor of Ngorongoro Crater for nearly two years while he followed a group of approximately 600 plains zebra. Leaving Africa, he studied at UC, San Diego, where he earned his PhD. He returned in 1996-2000, focusing on both species in northern Kenya. He stays involved with zebra in his capacity as Deputy Chair of the World Conservation Union's Species Survival Commission's Equid Specialist Group. Presently Mace works with grassland wildlife as Assistant Chief of the Wildlife Division for Nebraska Game and Parks.

Please join us for a fascinating safari through one of the world's natural wonders. Meeting is at Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances (1 bl south of 45th & Center), 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 14. The program will be followed by a short business meeting and a social hour.

**DeSoto Bird Count
April 30**

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Nelli's Notes

By Nelli Falzgraf

What Mama said: Get some sleep to sing like Papa
Spring usually means a calendar with more events for ASO, and this year is no exception. Migration has started, and In adult humans, sleep helps us learn

we're told that most of the Snow Geese and Pintails in the Rainwater Basin have moved north to their nesting grounds.

Rivers & Wildlife Celebration

Like others who attended the March 18-20 event in Kearney, Randy and I enjoyed the annual migration of Sandhill Cranes and three days of field trips. The birds are hunted in every state along their migration route to nesting grounds in Alaska, except Nebraska. Over half a million funnel through and stop along the Platte's sandbars and braided riverine habitat to rest, fatten on grubs and waste corn, flirt and renew pair bonds.

Historically the birds could spread out along the Platte, but human settlement and resultant loss of habitat have squeezed the birds to a limited area in central Nebraska. While seeing them concentrated is convenient for us, it's detrimental to the birds. When crowded, the birds are more susceptible to diseases like cholera, which kills many each year.

Rowe Sanctuary and Audubon Nebraska organized the event and arranged for dynamic speakers, including George Archibald of the International Crane Foundation; Julie Zickefoose, a natural history writer, artist, and songbird rehabilitator; and Michael Forsberg, one of our state's premier photographers.

Programs included the Platte River, live birds of Raptor Recovery, Attracting Purple Martin Colonies, Birds of the Great Plains, Using the Nebraska Birding Trail System, the Arctic NWR, Audubon at Home, and Celebrating Sandhill Cranes, by Paul Johnsgard.

Pauline Dickey represented ASO, distributed free Audubon literature, and sold ASO tee shirts, books, and pewter cranes. Thanks, Pauline, for providing an ASO presence and representing Audubon.

Upcoming Activities

Earth Day is April 23, to be held in Elmwood Park. It celebrates a public desire to create a sustainable society. Valuable volunteers helped for years, but we need more help. Please call Pauline

and remember, but the role of sleep in developmental learning has not been examined. Studying how young birds learn to sing could provide a model for how children learn during the critical years of speech development. The following is from "How Sleep Affects the Developmental Learning of Bird Song" by S. Deregnacourt, P. Mitra, O. Feher, C. Pytte, and O. Techernichovski in *Nature*, February 17, 2005. There's also an article in the *World-Herald*, February 18.

"Like humans, songbirds have innate predispositions to imitate complex vocalizations." The study involves young Zebra Finches. Researchers measured song development at 30 to 90 days after hatching and quantified how young birds learn songs from recordings of adult male birds and live tutors.

The biggest change occurred after sleep, with singing more unstructured the first hour after wake-up and greatly improved after two to three hours of morning practice. The researchers proposed that initial post-sleep babbling allowed a young bird "an opportunity to explore its vocal abilities and improve imitation."

"Birds that showed stronger post-sleep deterioration during development achieved a better final initiation," meaning the singing of those who sang the worst right after wake-up sang the best by midday. Upon reaching peak performance about three hours after wake-up, their singing didn't improve the rest of the day, even with continued practice. It wasn't practice that internalized song learning, but sleep. The bird brains fired neurons during sleep, much as their brain showed activity while singing when awake. It could be that the brains of young birds rehearsed songs during sleep.

The observations were of young birds. While adult birds of one year old did learn new turns, there wasn't a huge post-sleep improvement after a few hours practice. It appeared the opportune age for song imitation is when they're young.

It looks as if sleep is needed for young songbirds to perfect their vocal

Dickey, 932-8205, to help staff the repertoire. So the next time your annual event that has something for developing young-uns balk at everyone. bedtime.....

April Events

Spring Banquet plans are announced in article, page 3.

April 6 (Wed) Board Meeting

The Sarpy County and DeSoto Spring Bird Counts are coming soon. Articles on Pages 1 and 3.

April 14 (Thur) General Meeting

April 23 (Sat) Earth Day

The 3rd Annual Summer Garden Walk is being planned by Jackie Scholar (551-5045), and this year we'll partner with a Vintage Car Club. Contact Jackie to suggest city gardens or help staff.

April 30 (Sat) Field Trip to Branched Oak Lake

April 30 (Sat) DeSoto Bird Count

The Photo Contest is Back

By Eric Scholar

Entries are being sought for ASO's photo contest to be displayed at the Spring Banquet Tuesday, May 10. Contest categories are Birds, Wildflowers, Scenics, Insects, Black and White, People in Nature/Humor in Nature.

Photos must be from nature—zoo shots and 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 Monday, May 2. To make arrangements for delivering your photos, please phone Eric Scholar at 551-5045. I encourage everyone to enter the contest to make it most enjoyable.

Volunteers Needed For

Earth Day April 23

Volunteers are needed for Omaha's Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 23, from 12:00 noon until 6:00 p.m.

Anyone interested should contact Candy Bless at jynsweet@yahoo.com or at her cell phone number, 208-0560.

ASO Banquet Tuesday, May 10

You are cordially invited to join us at our annual Spring Banquet Tuesday, May 10, at Johnny's Steakhouse, L Street. The evening will provide dinner, camaraderie, and a presentation. Photo contest entries and prizes will be displayed.

We are most fortunate to have as our presenter **Michael Forsberg**, renowned for his exquisite photographs of wildlife, especially Sandhill Cranes, and wild places in our State. His photos and nature writing have been featured often in *Nebraskaland* Magazine and other publications, including National Geographic. His recently published not-to-be-missed coffee table book will be offered for sale.

The banquet ceremonies will include installation of officers and conferring of awards.

Cost of the dinner including dessert is \$20.00 per person. Please return the reservation form on the bottom of this page with your check payable to ASO and mail to Laurine Blankenau, 3808 Grebe, Omaha 68112, by Friday, May 6.

For information, contact Nelli Falzgraf, 292-9687, or Laurine, 451-3647.

DeSoto Bird Count Saturday April 30

The DeSoto Spring Bird Count will be held Saturday, April 30, under the direction of Bob

All types of volunteers are needed for the day of the event to monitor booths, work with children in the education tent, help with clean-up and recycling throughout the day. Also persons are needed to work in the information booth at all times of the day.

During the week before Earth Day, we need about 25 people to distribute flyers around the city.

There will be a volunteer briefing held on April 18.

If anyone would like more information, please contact Candy Bless.

Banquet Reservation

Johnny's Steakhouse on L Street

Tuesday, May 10 Cash Bar 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____
Number and Street City State 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 6.

Project FeederWatch -

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ASO Represented at Volunteer Symposium on All-Bird Conservation

By Bechara Embaid

Birds of North America Online

Now available

BirdScope, "News and Views from Sapsucker Woods," Winter 2005, features an article by Miyoko Chu describing a new study and entertainment opportunity for birders.

The most comprehensive reference work for North America's birdlife ever produced, this monumental resource exceeds the limits of a printed source. All 18,000 pages of *The Birds of North America (BNA) Online* is to be

Barry, Wildlife Biologist at the Refuge.

As in the past, the more persons helping with the count, the better. Please sign up for an area of your choice or where you are needed at bob-barry@fws.gov, 642-5404.

The Count runs from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

L-R: Bechara Embaid, Andrea Cade, continually updated, making it Mace Hack accurately termed a "living publication."

On March 10 I attended the Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation in Grand Island, and found the symposium a great success. The program was designed to assist organizations recruit, retain, and reward volunteers.

Representatives from Pheasants Forever, the American Red Cross, Peace Corps, National Master Naturalist Initiative, Salvation Army, UNO and Girl Scouts of America, not all conservationist, shared their knowledge and experiences. Their stories and advice impressed and inspired. We were hearing from the best in the State.

We learned that Pheasants Forever is involved first hand in improving over 1.2 million acres of habitat and has 15,000 volunteers and 59 chapters. Most important, PF is looking to diversify, i.e. to care for additional bird species. (Hello, we are here!!)

The first step in the "hunt" for volunteers, I discovered, are websites where needs for volunteers are posted along with types of work to be expected. These web sites have been quite effective in finding sufficient numbers of willing workers.

An organization must then have an agenda, set goals, be able to monitor, to recognize and to reward accomplishments. Reward options include conferring a sense of belonging and being useful to the community. Finally, a volunteer administrator who organizes all of the volunteer activities is essential.

Those attending learned that volunteers not only give their time, talents and labor. Sixty percent of them also give money, making them an organization's first

The online reader will have access to the "latest scientific information, image galleries, sound recordings, and video footage."

BNA Online is produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and is accessible at <bna.birds.cornell.edu> by means of individual subscriptions and institutional subscriptions for libraries and others.

All 716 North American breeding bird species are included in the printed editions of the American Ornithologists' Union, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the Academy of Natural Sciences. Species accounts "draw on information from 100 scientific references or more, including descriptions of birds at the nest, timing and routes of migration, distribution, habitats, population trends, and conservation and management.

A \$40 12-month subscription for an individual gives access to the entire database and demos. Gift subscriptions are available at bna-sale@cornell.edu>

Slate of Candidates for 2005-2006

The following candidates will be presented for election at the April general meeting.

President - Elliott Bedows

1st Vice-President - Jackie Scholar

2nd Vice-President - Laurine Blankenau

Treasurer - Patty Albright

Recording Secretary - Linda Dennis

Directors: Urban Lehner (replacing Bob Fuchs, whose

fundraisers.

I came away from this Symposium having learned a number of things. Most of all, I came away convinced that through volunteers, mountains can sometimes be moved!

Connect With Nature in Maine

Each summer Audubon offers opportunities to attend programs and trips in Maine for adults, youth, and families at Hog Island and Borestone Mountain Sanctuary.

Accessible only by boat, **Hog Island Camp** is nestled in a 330-acre coastal wildlife sanctuary in midcoast Maine, with summer sessions led by some of the most respected naturalists and environmental educators in the nation.

Campers awake to bird song and fall asleep with the sound of the tide. By day they roam balsam forest and fern-filled meadows, or explore tide pools and rocky beaches on this coastal Maine island. You're away from it all - exactly where you should be.

Accommodations: Campers love the natural setting and rustic, restored 19th-century buildings, dormitories or rooms with two twin beds, shared bath. Delicious meals family style are served, with treats of fresh lobster feasts and live music.

A limited number of scholarships are available to educators; Audubon staff and chapter personnel; Girl Scout leaders and associated adults. Email: camps@maineaudubon.org or call 1 888 325 5261. A scholarship application is available at www.maineaudubon.org.

Hog Island Adult Sessions: (prices are per person, double occupancy)

Maine Island Experience June 19-July 25 \$950

Field Ornithology June 26-July 2 \$985

Hog Island Retreat Session I June 26-July 2 \$900

to Audubon in 1958, its mountainside camp lodges—accessible by foot or boat only—are surrounded by rare old-growth forest, crystalline blue-green ponds, remarkable granite cliffs, and sweeping views. Every summer the sanctuary offers adult and youth campers an exceptional experience in the wild.

Borestone Mountain Sessions

Naturalist's Weekend August 19-22 \$450

Youth Naturalist Program Session I July 8-14 \$800

Youth Naturalist Program Session II July 22-28 \$800

Audubon Trips in Maine

Exploring Maine by Schooner June 12-18,

June 26-July 2 \$850

Birding Downeast Maine July 8-10 \$375

Brier Island (off Nova Scotia's Bay of Fundy)

August 25-29 \$780

Wings of Autumn on Monhegan Sept 23-26 \$450

Register by mail, phone, or email:

Natural History of the Maine Coast July 3-9 \$985	Registrar
	Maine Audubon
Hog Island Retreat Session II July 3-9 \$900	20 Gilsland Farm Road
Seabirds, Lobsters & Ocean Currents July 10-16 \$985	Falmouth ME 04105 1 888 325 5261 Ext 215
Workshop for Educators July 17-23 \$985	camps@maineaudubon.org
Naturalizing by Kayak July 17-23 \$,200	Additional Info: (207) 781-2330 ext 215
Hog Island Retreat Session III July 17-23 \$900	www.maineaudubon.org
Muscongus Bay Kayaking for Women July 24-29 \$1,050	Programs and trips are exceptional, led at some of the same sites Roger Tory Peterson, Rachel Carson and Andrew Wyeth declared favorites.
Audubon Week August 14-20 \$750	
Om on the Island: Yoga Retreat August 21-24 \$350	By participating in an Audubon program or trip in Maine, you will help support Audubon's work for wildlife conservation in the state.

Hog Island Teen, Youth and Family Sessions

Coastal Bird Studies for Teens June 26-July 2 \$985

Coastal Natural History for Teens July 3-9 \$985

Teen Kayaking Session I July 11-16 \$975

Teen kayaking Session II July 18-23 \$975

Family Camp July 24-29 \$850 adult; \$685 child

Youth Camp August 2-9 \$1,050

Borestone Mountain Audubon Sanctuary

Located just south of Moosehead Lake in Elliotsville, Borestone Mountain Audubon Sanctuary encompasses more than 1,000 acres in western Maine. Built in the exposed-log Adirondack style early in the 20th century and bequeathed



ANWR Vote Disappointing - The Fight Continues

By Tad Leeper, Conservation Chair

Like many ASO members and fellow conservationists, I was disappointed and disheartened by the recent defeat of the Cantwell Amendment to the Senate budget bill. This amendment would have prevented future oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. On March 16, 2005, the U.S. Senate agreed by a narrow vote of 51-49 to open the Refuge to oil drilling some time in the future. I was especially disappointed that Nebraska Senator Chuck Hagel chose to side with oil drilling interests and voted against the Cantwell Amendment. On the other hand, I was greatly heartened by Senator Ben Nelson's continued staunch opposition to drilling in the Refuge.

I encourage ASO members to call Senator Hagel's office and let him know that he voted the wrong way, and to call Senator Nelson's office and let him know that he did the right thing in voting for the Cantwell Amendment. Use the toll-free number for the U.S. Capitol Switchboard to call both Senators today: 1-800-247-2971.

I was also encouraged by the post-Senate vote e-mails that I received from field representatives of such organizations as the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Nebraska Coalition for Alaska. In particular, Paul Schramski (pschramski@greencorps.org), Field Organizer for the Nebraska Coalition for Alaska, declared, "The battle is far from over. This is just the beginning. There is a long way to go before the drill rigs roll

Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History

From the Institute

The Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History (RTPI), a private organization located in Jamestown, New York, states that promises and an agreement it made with Roger and Virginia Peterson in 1993 have been breached by Virginia Peterson and her estate.

The promise, affirmed in the 1993 agreement, provided that the life work of Roger Tory Peterson would be donated to RTPI for the purpose of educating children about the natural world. This included thousands of pieces of original art, hundreds of thousands of photographs, manuscripts, correspondence, and much more. The work and collections were to be kept at one location, RTPI.

RTPI raised millions of dollars to construct a state-of-the-art museum building with the necessary infrastructure to house art and artifacts in perpetuity, hire professional staff to operate the facility, and made other commitments based upon the promises and the agreement.

At the dedication of the Museum building, Peterson stated, "The function of the Institute is not just to house my memorabilia, and it will, but also to reflect my philosophy by putting in the hands of teachers the media and tools needed to teach."

Rather than sending the intact collection of Peterson's work to RTPI, Virginia Peterson sent only a part, retaining a significant portion for herself and,

into the Arctic Refuge, and we'll be working with members of both parties in both Houses of Congress to keep Arctic drilling out of the final budget."

I found solace in the bitter defeat through the words of the poet Wendell Berry in "The Peace of Wild Things."

When despair for the world grows in
me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's
lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with
forethought of grief.

I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time

I rest in the grace of the world, and am
free.

The poem suggests to me that we conservationists are an incredibly fortunate lot. We already know how to "rest in

subsequently, her heirs who are unrelated to Dr. Peterson.

A complaint was filed on December 3, 2004, in the Superior Court of Hartford, Connecticut, to secure the items previously promised by Dr. Peterson and set forth in the 1993 agreement.

If the court allows, we'd like to be able to show them letters of support for preserving Roger's life work for present and future generations, as intended. If you wish to write a letter of support, please address it to James M. Berry, President, Roger Tory Peterson Institute, 311 Curtis St, Jamestown, NY 14701-9620.

the grace of the world," albeit sometimes only fleetingly. May we continue our conservation and education efforts - and the ANWR battle - with redoubled vigor and resolve. Let our legacy be to help countless others to "come into the peace of wild things."

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

Audubon Society

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Omaha 391-3411; Omaha address:
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If you find an
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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.

volunteer at
402-731-9869.

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha

P. O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103-0342

Fontenelle Bird Club Field Trip April 9

The Fontenelle Bird Club will host a birding trip on Saturday, April 9, led by Rick Schmid. We will meet at Walnut Creek at 7:00 A.M. where we will carpool to Branched Oak Lake near Lincoln.

We will bird that area and stop for lunch. On the return trip, we will stop at the Jack Sinn Area and bird. For info, contact Carolyn Sonderman at juliussonderman@aol.com or 333-7122 (home) or 880-7122 (cell).

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

Office Building and Heron Haven Wetland: 11809 Old Maple Road, Omaha 68164

Phone: 445-4138 - <http://audubon-omaha.org>

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Carol Rasmussen, 4503 So. 16th St, Omaha 68107 731-3939

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Building Supervisor Bechara Embaid, 3218 No 120th Ct Apt 221 Omaha 68164... 965-9598

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NAS Board Member Ione Werthman, 11649 Burt St, #011, Omaha 68154 493-0373

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You are alone in the woods. There is solace and safety there. I know that our ancestors were born there. We are home.

Jenean Hornbuckle, Cherokee, 2000

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

Aldo Leopold

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 birtghright of a true humanity.

Henry Beston, The Outermost House