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.

March/April 2017 Volume 46, Issue 2



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

Documentary "The Messenger" Will Be Shown at March Meeting By Alex Wiles

Join us on March 9th at 7pm for a screening of "the Messenger," a documentary which presents an artful investigation into the causes of songbird mass depletion and the people working to turn the tide. This visually thrilling film reveals how the issues facing birds also pose daunting implications for our planet. Popcorn and other snacks will be included for this free event. The meeting will be held at the Weitz Community Engagement Center, room 201, on the UNO Dodge Campus and it is open to the public, so bring a friend!

CHANGE of Date and Location of the April General Meeting

By Clem Klaphake

The Audubon Society of Omaha (ASO) and Fontenelle Forest have again joined to sponsor a special speaker. Instead of having the ASO meeting on Thursday, April 13th we will be meeting at Fontenelle Forest on Friday, April 21st at 7:00p.m.

The special speaker will be Steve Shunk, woodpecker specialist who lives in a place called 'Woodpecker Wonderland' in central Oregon. There are 11 woodpecker species that breed there in an area smaller than the city of Omaha.

Steve has spent nearly 20 years studying the charismatic family of birds called woodpeckers. Recently he spent 3 seasons as a field biologist with the Institute for Bird Population studying the Black-backed Woodpeckers of California's Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains. He also co-founded the East Cascades Bird Conservancy and started the region's woodpecker festival in 2008. Steve also was a Christmas Bird Count compiler for 15 years, co-founded the Oregon Birding Trails program and coordinated its flagship project, the



Red Headed Woodpecker



Pileated Woodpecker Photos by Duane Schwery

Oregon Cascades Birding Trail.

Steve now lectures and leads birding tours across North America, Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru, Sicily and Borneo. His company, Paradise Birding, is located in Sisters, Oregon.

The culmination of all of Steve's woodpecker studies is the publication of Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America in May of 2016. This is a beautiful book which covers the natural history of all North American woodpeckers, including many great photographs. If you have a copy of Steve's book bring it with you and he will sign it.

The title of Steve's talk for the 21st will be "East Meets West: Nebraska's Breeding Woodpeckers." At the heart of the Great Plains, Nebraska bridges a major habitat gap between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River Valley, bringing birds together from both sides of the continent - and woodpeckers offer a prime example. Eastern and western subspecies of the Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers meet in Nebraska, as do the 'Yellow-shafted' and 'Red-shafted' forms of the Northern Flicker. The decidedly 'western' Lewis's Woodpecker breeds irregularly in the far northwest of Nebraska, and the eastern subspecies of the Pileated Woodpecker continues to move westward from the Missouri River border. The Red-bellied and Red-headed Woodpeckers occupy complementary habitats across the state, but their strength lies in the east.

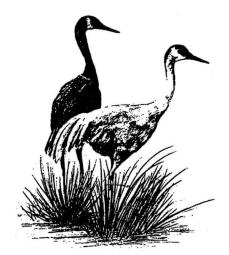
Come join North American woodpecker specialist, Steve Shunk, as he takes us deeper into the lives and times of Nebraska's breeding Woodpeckers on April 21st.

Field Notes from the President: By Matt Miller

Hello fellow Audubon Society of Omaha members!

In this newsletter I want to talk a little about some events going on this spring in our conservation community. I also want to thank anyone who has purchased bird seed this last sale. Your contributions help us with various projects ranging from conservation to community support projects.

I don't know about you, but I am ready for spring. Orioles, tanagers, and warblers are all heading our way, and sometimes it is hard to hold back my excitement. With that said, now is an opportune time to schedule vacations or day trips to go find our elusive avian friends. For example, the 47th annual Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival is happening March 16th-19th in Kearney, Nebraska. If you have never gone to the Central Platte to observe the mass influx of waterfowl and of course Sandhill cranes. I feel this event would be a great trip to immerse yourself in our state's top ecotourism at-



traction. The line-up looks pretty impressive with Jane Alexander as the banquet speaker. Jane is a Tony award winning actress who believes that part of being a birder is the responsibility to support avian conservation. Other speakers include Iliana Pena, Director of Conservation from Audubon Texas: and Matt Anderson, Audubon's Vice President of Climate Change, along with speakers, birding trips and plenty of information to make you a Sandhill and Central Platte expert.

I will also remind you to look for ASO-sponsored speakers and birding trips coming up. We have some excellent guides that arrange birding days for the most advanced birder to the future birder that is just starting out. So look at our new website and get on our birding calendar to find the best trip for your needs.

My final thought is to remind everyone that as you are birding this spring and summer to keep in mind the birds that you spend time looking for have specific habitat requirements. Wetlands, prairies, and woodlands all are in jeopardy of development and neglect, and our birding community can be a strong voice to protect and bring these areas to a healthier state. So spread the word and get your binoculars because there is plenty to see out there in our great state.

Thanks again for your membership to Audubon Society of Omaha.

Yours in Conservation, Matt Miller

Have you checked out our new website?

Audubon Society of Omaha's new website, omahaaudubon.org, is up and running.

Would you like to know where some of the best birding spots are located in Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders, Washington and Cass Counties in Nebraska? Where to go birding in Pottawattamie County in Iowa? Find out by visiting our new website and clicking on Go Birding at the top of the page.

Did you know the Audubon Society of Omaha owns a Prairie Preserve that you can visit? Find out where it is located and the history of the prairie by visiting our new website and clicking on Conservation at the top of the page.

Are you interested in becoming an advocate for the environment? Suggestions can be found on our website. Just click on Conservation and then Advocacy along the left-hand side.

Members have already used our new website to request receiving their newsletters by email, purchasing seed during our winter seed sale and renewing their memberships. Members will have the option of making reservations for our annual spring banquet online.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

March 25th Field Trip to Branched Oak Lake April 22nd Field Trip

by Clem Klaphake

On Saturday, March 25th, the Audubon Society of Omaha will be going on a field trip to Branched Oak Lake (BOL) near Lincoln in Lancaster County. We hope to see a variety of water-dependent bird species such as ducks, geese, possible Common Loons, grebes, coots, pelicans, and gulls. There also are likely to be some early passerine migrants such as Eastern Phoebes, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Kinglets. Raptors are also likely to be on the move by that date. Larry Einemann of Lincoln will be meeting us in the morning and guide us to where the best birding areas might be at that time in March.

We will meet on the south end of the dam at BOL at 8:00 a.m. It

is about a 1 hour drive from the Omaha area to the BOL dam. There are several routes you can take to get there. This probably is the most direct if you are coming from Omaha: take I-80 to exit 401 - which is right on the north side of Lincoln – ao north at the exit onto Hwy 34 for about 4 miles, then turn right onto Hwy 79 to W. Raymond Road where you turn left. Then drive 3 miles to where the road splits – take the right road which goes over the dam (these are all blacktop roads). Before you go over the dam, turn left into the parking lot and then down to the dam.

Rather than have all of us meet somewhere and caravan on the interstate, I'm leaving it up to individuals to find or form a carpool. Some of you may want to just bird for a half day and others all day. We will be on our own for lunch. The last couple of years we have stopped at a small café in Raymond for lunch.

The April field trip will be on Saturday, April 22. Steve Shunk, woodpecker specialist, and our (ASO and Fontenelle Forest) speaker on April 21 will lead a field trip/workshop outing to Louisville SRA, Platte River State Park and/or Schramm SRA. Great opportunity to bird with a birding professional. As always, field trips may be modified depending on weather. We will meet in the Fontenelle Forest Nature Center parking lot at 7:00 a.m.

YOUTH BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

Parents or grandparents and their youth, ages 8 – 15, are invited to attend these free guided events.

Sunday March 19th 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Ebird ranks Wehrspann Lake as the 3rd best place to bird in Sarpy County. 180 species have been recorded there. Located

ard is the hert that loveth nought,

In May, when al this merth is wrought, When he may on these braunches here The smale briddes syngen clere Her blesful swete song pitous....

> Geoffrey Chaucer 1345-1400

near 156th and Giles, we will bird several access points around the lake. Another hotspot we'll check is Wehrspann's wetland mitigation pond. Then we'll head over to Prairie Queen recreation area near Werner Park. Shorebirds and waterfowl, native sparrows and hawks and an active eagle nest will be the subjects of our search.

Sunday April 23rd 4:30pm – 6:30pm

Listed as number 2 on the best places to bird in Douglas County is Neale Woods, a property owned by Fontenelle Forest, but located North of Hwy 680 along the Missouri River Flyway. This property consists of both prairie and upland forest and to date 151 species have been reportedly seen there. Home to the Barred Owl, birders will hear its call alongside the songs of warblers who find respite here during their long migration. Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, Swainson's Thrush and the Eastern Bluebird are often seen at this less-traveled birding hotspot.

Note: April showers bring May flowers – if rain, a rain date will be announced on the ASO website and Facebook page or you may call 402-885-0990 for information.



Audubon Student Art Contest and Show - April 8, 2017

This ASO event draws a large number of entries and we need volunteers to help with the hanging of artwork, as well as help with greeting students and their families and friends on the day of the show. If you are free and would like to help it would be greatly appreciated. This is a great opportunity to meet and encourage future birders and to see fun and creative artwork from area students.

Here are the dates and times we need your help:

Friday, April 7 – 9:30 am till Noon: Hanging of artwork
Saturday, April 8 – 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm: Help with hosting the show
Saturday, April 8 – 3:00 pm till 4:00 pm: Help with take down and take away

Please contact Virginia Stauffer at vstauffer1@yahoo.com or 214-676-6289 or Jackie Scholar at jbscholar@cox.net if you can help.

20th Annual DeSoto CBC Results

by Jerry Toll

This year's Christmas Bird Count for the DeSoto NWR took place on December 30th as planned. The weather cooperated with temperatures 22-46(F), winds 5-20mph, and sky clear becoming cloudy in the pm. There were 12 parties with a new record number of counters at 28, half of which were new to the count. Encouragingly, three of the counters were under the age of 20.

Species count was 73 which tied with 2013 for second place behind 2012 (74). Total individuals counted were respectable at 25,359 due in part to a large body of open water near the visitor center at DeSoto NWR.

14 species of waterfowl present contributed to the species count with record high numbers for Trumpeter Swan (135), Gadwall (10), Ringed-necked Duck (76), and Common Goldeneye (202). Other high counts were Northern Harrier (9), and Sharp-shinned Hawk (8), and meadowlark species (459). Noteworthy species were: a reliable field sparrow sighting last seen on the CBC in 2000, a Prairie Falcon only seen twice before on the count, a saw whet owl heard, Common Grackle (4), Brown-headed Cowbird (7), and Purple Finch (4). Pileated Woodpeckers continue to be present in low numbers that were first seen in 2010. The

only species with lowest number recorded was Blue Jay with only 57 individuals although, Horned Larks were difficult to find (6).

Thanks to all who volunteered their time. Special thanks to The DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges and Hitchcock Nature Center. Thank you to the Audubon Society of Omaha for making a contribution to National Audubon Society supporting their 117 years of monitoring bird population trends in North America.

BIRD IDENTIFICATION CLASS 2017

8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

\$25.00 for all 3 classes must be paid before the start of the first class
Part 1 – MARCH 11th • Fontenelle Forest Nature Center
Part 2 – APRIL 15th • Wetland Learning Center
Part 3 – MAY 6th • Fontenelle Forest Nature Center

With over 50 million 'birders' in the U.S., bird watching is the fastest growing outdoor activity today. Led by Clem Klaphake and Justin Rink, past presidents of the Audubon Society of Omaha, this class includes local field trips/walks designed to teach you how to identify the birds in your backyard or any other location you might encounter them, use of field guides and use of binoculars. No prior knowledge of bird identification is needed. If you are interested contact Clem Klaphake at 402-292-2276 or ckavian@cox.net<mail-to:ckavian@cox.net> to register. For ages 12 and up. The class is limited to 15 people.

Nature Books To Share With The Children In Your Life

Everybody Needs A Rock by Byrd Baylor (ages 4 to 8)

> No One But You by Douglas Wood (ages 4 to 8)

The Earth and I by Frank Asch (ages 3 to 7)

The Dandelion Seed by Joseph Anthony (ages 3 to 10)

My Spring Robin by Anne Rockwell (ages 2 to 6)

> About Birds by Cathryn Sill (ages 4 to 8)

ANNUAL BANQUET SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

This year's banquet will be held at Gorat's Steak House, 4917 Center Street. Reservations can be made via our new website or through the mail. A reservation form is provided below. Reservation deadline is Monday, May 8.

PATRON TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR MAY BANQUET

Patron tickets are available for \$50 per person for the May 17th banquet. Tax deductible amount per patron ticket is \$50 minus cost of the dinner. Conservation and education projects that your donation helps support include an inventory of saw-whet owls in the southern tier of lowa, a Boy Scout Conservation patch, Audubon Society of Omaha 's Youth Birding group and maintenance and inventory of ASO's prairie. Major donations to conservation organizations from ASO in the last 2 years include the Nebraska Land Trust for conservation easements in western Nebraska and UNO's expansion of Allwine Prairie.

BANQUET RESERVATION Gorat's Steak House • 4917 Center Street • Omaha, NE 68106 Wednesday, May 17, 2017 • Cash Bar 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m.		
Name(s)	Phone	
Address and zip code		
Email Address		
Please choose from the following entrees:		
\$29 Sirloin (10 oz.)	\$24 Chicken Piccata\$21 Cheese Ravioli	
Patron ticket(s) \$50	(Tax Deductible amount is \$50 minus price of dinner)	
Enclosed is \$ for person(s).		
Make check payable to Audubon Society of Omaha. Mail to Helen Bartee, 521 Beverly Drive, Omaha, NE 68114 Online reservations can be made at omahaaudubon.org Reservations must be received by Monday, May 8.		

"Oll of us are born with an interest in the world about us. Watch a human baby or any other young animal crawling about. It is investigating and learning things with all its senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. From the moment we are born we are explorers in a complex and fascinating world." "The wonders of nature are not confined to exotic places like the tropical forests of the world. They are just as accessible in your own yard or garden, if you look for them. Through the naturalist's eyes a sparrow can be as interesting as a bird of Paradise, the behavior of a mouse as intriguing as that of a tiger. Our planet is beautifully intricate, brimming over with enigmas to be solved and riddles to be unraveled. As a naturalist you will never suffer from that awful modern disease called boredom – so go out and greet the natural world with curiosity and delight, and enjoy it."

- Gerald Durrell, The Amateur Naturalist

The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating by Elizabeth Tova Bailey

by Laurine Blankenau

Put off by the title? I was, then a friendly librarian talked me into it. I'm grateful. I learned so much about the vast abilities of snails that I heartily recommend it.

The author, bedridden for months. was given a pot of wildflowers with a small snail in it. The recipient subsequently spent many of her long, solitary and inactive hours observing the snail's daily habits eating, moving about and using its two tentacles as guides and senses. Too weak to hold a book, she was relaxed and entertained by what she learned about the small creature sharing her room. Eventually the pot was replaced by an aquarium-turned terrarium with plants and other objects a snail lives with in nature.

A skilled writer, Ms. Bailey learned from other writers who studied snails and their remarkable capabilities enabling them to survive

Election of Officers for 2017-2018

By Tisha Johnson

The annual election of officers will be held at our April general meeting. The slate of officers is listed below.

President:

TBA

1st Vice President:

2nd Vice President:

Tisha Johnson

Treasurer:

Recording Secretary: Kathleen Crawford-Rose

Corresponding Secretary: Kathleen Crawford-Rose

Directors:

Virginia Stauffer and Jackie Scholar

Nominations can be presented at the meeting provided permission has been obtained from the nominee.

half a billion years. The creatures survived in some degree because of their abilities to find food, hide from danger, and hibernate in shelters they erect themselves – their shells which they reinforce against the cold. And in spite of being footless, their slime enables them to travel smoothly.

To really know an animal, one needs to observe it closely over a period of time, as Bailey did. She adds the words of men and women of science, including Darwin. To them, snails have an amazing degree of what we know as intelligence, decision-making, and an ability to form connections that appear to be ardent, even romantic. Yes, really, this latter fact I did learn from the book, not through my feverish imagination.

To Ms. Bailey, the snail was "the best of companions." "Naturally solitary and slow-paced, it entertained and taught me, and was beautiful to watch as it glided silently along, leading me through a dark time into a world beyond that of my own species."

I didn't begin as a fan of snails. Now they intrigue me. One drawback for a reader could be an acquired distaste for escargot.



On Wednesday, May 24, 2017, the Omaha Community Foundation will sponsor Omaha Gives!, a 24-hour, online fundraising event to raise support for nonprofits in the Omaha area. It is a community-wide event in its 5th year. In 2016, 46,251 donations totalina \$8.9 million were raised for 789 local nonprofits Last year, 31 donors gave a total of \$1,842 to Audubon Society of Omaha. With incentives from local sponsors, Audubon Society of Omaha received a total of \$1,918 for its local conservation efforts.

Support our cause – the health of the environment - by donating a minimum of \$10 by credit card on-line at Omaha Community Foundation's secure website: https://www.omahagives24. org during the event on May 24, from midnight to midnight. Or, you can ensure that you don't forget the date by scheduling advance donations starting April 1st, which will be processed on May 24. Audubon Society of Omaha is a 501(c)(3) organization and your donation is fully tax deductible.

Join Nebraska Ornithologists for a Birding Weekend May 19-21

The Nebraska Ornithologists Union will be meeting May 19-21 in Auburn, NE. In this corner of the state there are good places to find warblers, other migrating and resident species. Indian Cave State Park and Waubonsie State Park in neighboring lowa, along with other spots, are known to be favorites of spring migrants.

Birding hikes will be led by some of the state's most skilled birders. Meals are provided and a program is offered on Saturday evening. Check out the trip and specifics about lodging and other items in the April issue of the NOU newsletter, The Burrowing Owl. You do not have to be a member to attend. The web site is noubirds.org/

The NOU meets both spring and fall at sites around the state, giving members familiarity with good birding areas and other knowledge about Nebraska.

Addresses to Remember

President Donald Trump, 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 Don Bacon, U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Washington Capital Switchboard: 202-225-3121; 13906 Gold Circle, Suite 101 Omaha, NE 68144, 402-938-0300

Representative Jeff Fortenberry, 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: 402-471-Mayor Jean Stothert, Omaha/Douglas Civic Center1819 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 <u>direct transfer</u> 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)

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	



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

Audubon Society of Omaha P.O. Box 3542 Omaha NE 68103-3542 Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage Paid Omaha, Nebraska PERMIT NO. 79

Audubon Society of Omaha, Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103-3542 Phone: 402-445-4138 — 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 – 214-676-6289

Historian – Eric Scholar – 402-551-5045

Exec. Dir., Audubon Nebr. – Marian Langan – 402-797-2301 ASO Administrator – Stacey Coury – 402-445-4138 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.