



Meadowlark

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Find rapture with raptors at ASO's January meeting

Are you enraptured with raptors? Then don't miss our January members meeting on Thursday, January 9, at 7 p.m., featuring Bethany Thornton. Look for us in the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center on UNO's Dodge Street campus. Park in Lot E, directly north of the building. Tell the attendant that you are with the Audubon Society, and you will not have to pay.



Bethany, an avid birder, served as the Hitchcock HawkWatch Coordinator for the 2017 and 2018 seasons after working at many birding venues

across the U.S. Her stint at Hitchcock convinced her to settle in the Omaha area, and she currently works at Lauritzen Gardens, helping to care for their natural spaces and curating their bird list. Three raptors from Fontenelle Forest will join Bethany for what promises to be an exciting evening.

The Fall HawkWatch at the Hitchcock Nature Center has been an annual event since it was established by ASO members Loren and Babs Padelford in 1992. Along the Missouri River migratory corridor, the Loess Hills offer an optimal location for the HawkWatch, with an overall seasonal average of 13,000 birds representing 20 distinct species.

Feed the birds, and you'll see the birds in January and February

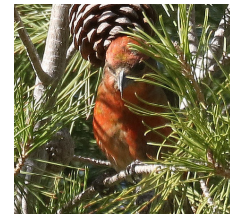
by Clem Klaphake

"In the bleak midwinter," as the song goes, birding in the Northern Plains can be a bit challenging, especially if you enjoy observing a variety of species. This time of year, birds follow the bird feeders, wherever they are — in yards, parks, nature centers and wildlife refuges.

Species on feeder guest lists are most likely to be sunflower, safflower, millet or niger seed eaters, plus those that prefer suet. Common visitors can include: Black-capped Chickadees; White-breasted Nuthatches; Downy, Hairy or Red-bellied Woodpeckers; Northern Cardinals; Dark-eyed Juncos; and a variety of Sparrows. Also watch for Carolina Wrens, Brown Creepers, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Purple Finches.

Be sure to check cemeteries with large pine and spruce trees, where you may spot the White-winged or Red Crossbill, a real treat. If you live in the Metro, take a spin in the country to look for Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs and a few Snow Buntings, mixed in with the Longspurs and over-wintering Meadowlark species.

And if there is any open water always watch for waterfowl (ducks, geese, or swans and an occasional Great Blue Heron).



Red Crossbill



Sandhill Cranes

By late February, Snow Geese (across Nebraska) and Sandhill Cranes (from Grand Island west to North Platte) start returning. In recent years, some Sandhill Cranes have wintered along the stretch from Grand Island to Kearney. If you haven't seen the Crane and Goose migrations, put them on your bucket list. More on this group of migrant species in the next Meadowlark newsletter and on our website.

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT HOW: YOU CAN COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

Resolve to conserve in January

Start planning for the new year now! Put climate change on your to-do list and resolve to reuse, recycle, repurpose and renew.

Show a little love this February

Be an early bird and start your spring cleaning by recycling all of your old papers, plastics and packaging!

ON THE HORIZON

January:

MEMBER MEETING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9

Speaker: Raptor expert Bethany Thornton, Lauritzen Gardens

Topic: Hawk Watching at Hitchcock

When: 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Where: Weitz Community Engagement Center on the UNO Campus

Park: FREE in Lot E, north of the building; tell the attendant, "Audubon"

Who: Members and the public (free)

FIELD TRIP: FEEDER WATCH

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11

What: See seasonal visitors on a three-site trek to feeders in Sarpy and Cass Counties, led by Clem Klaphake

When: 8 a.m. to noon

Where: Site 1: Fontenelle Forest; Site 2: Bob and Kathleen Rose's home on Bellevue Boulevard; Site 3: Kathy and Duane Schwery's home south of the Platte River in Cass County

Who: Birders who enjoy good company, good cheer (rumor has it there may be hot drinks and cookies), and variety

February:

MEMBER MEETING

DATE TBD - CHECK OUR ONLINE CALENDAR IN FEBRUARY

Topic: Screening and panel discussion of Alex Wile's lead-poisoning short documentary, *Fragments*

Who: Members and the public (free)

FIELD TRIP: WINTER BIRDING

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16

What: Walk on the wild side at Camp Wakonda with Matt Miller, Fontenelle Forest's Restoration Biologist, to explore restoration projects and see wildlife

When: 10 a.m.

Where: Camp Wakonda, 402 Forest Drive, Bellevue

Who: Birders looking for an in-depth experience with a restoration expert

STUDENT ART CONTEST

ENTRY DEADLINE, FEB. 22

Details: see page 3 of this issue



Photo by Kayla Johnson

Field notes from the President

by Bob Wells, President, Audubon Society of Omaha

In November, the National Audubon Society certified UNO's Audubon Campus Chapter, sponsored by ASO, keeping National Audubon on track to certify 50 Campus Chapters by the end of this year and 150 by the end of 2020. Designed to increase student engagement in conservation and environmental activism, the initiative to create Campus Chapters has been a National priority since 2018. It offers students a seat at the table and the autonomy to drive local efforts aligned with National objectives, with the support of traditional Audubon Chapters, such as ASO.

With help from Cornell-trained ornithologist Dr. John McCarty, who leads UNO's Environmental Program, ASO identified 30 Campus Chapter members and five student officers through targeted marketing and an organization fair. All are Environmental Science majors looking for meaningful fieldwork and networking opportunities with conservation professionals. ASO has found several local partners to provide those opportunities, including: Fontenelle Forest Land Stewardship; Pottawattamie Conservation (the agency overseeing Hitchcock Nature Center); and UNO's own research station at Glacier Creek Preserve, in northwest Douglas County. ASO continues to seek additional partners. Recent UNO graduate Michaela Johnson, a restoration biologist at Fontenelle Forest, serves as liaison for the Chapter.

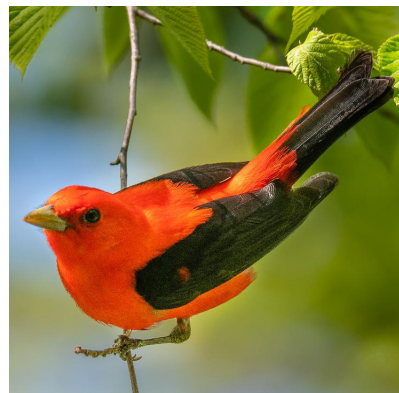
At the Chapter's first event, 17 members removed invasive honeysuckle from the History Trail at Fontenelle Forest and spotted several Red-headed Woodpeckers on a 1.5 mile birding hike that also netted incredible views of the devastation created by this year's flooding.

The eyes have it – your photos

We need your bird photos! Please email them to Meadow Lark at asopublisher@gmail.com



Carolina Wren
Photo by Phil Swanson



Scarlet Tanager
Photo by Ron Hiatt



House Sparrow
Photo by Justin Pence

2020 STUDENT ART CONTEST

“I felt an intimacy with [birds] bordering on frenzy [that] must accompany my steps through life,” wrote John James Audubon. Memorialized in his detailed portraits of birds in their natural habitats, Audubon’s passion still inspires birders today. To continue his legacy and fulfill our mission, Audubon Society of Omaha proudly invites student artists to submit entries for our annual Student Art Contest.

WHAT: Original student artwork featuring birds. Many prizes will be awarded in these categories: Realism, Graphic Design, Cartooning, and Recycled. Starting January 2, look for rules, entry forms and more at audubon-omaha.org under the Special Events tab.

WHY: Because studies show that children learn by doing or creating artwork focused on a specific subject, we think this is a win-win for reaching new birders and their families.

Calling All Student Artists Grades K-12



WHO: All K-12 students, even if their school does not participate.

ENTRY DEADLINE:

Submit entries in person at the Audubon Society of Omaha office, located in the Center Mall at 42nd and Center Streets, lower level, Suite 108, during these dates and hours:

Friday, February 21, 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. or Saturday, February 22, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

ART SHOW: View every work of art submitted on Saturday, April 18, from noon until 3 p.m., in Creighton University’s Harper Center at 602 N. 20th Street, Omaha.

AWARDS CEREMONY: See the winners get their prizes at 1:30 p.m. for Grades K-8 and 2:30 p.m. for Grades 9-12 at the Harper Center auditorium.

HERE’S HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please consider volunteering to:

- Collect and organize art at the ASO office on Friday, February 21, or Saturday, February 22
- Hang artwork at Creighton University’s Harper Center on Saturday, April 18, from 8 a.m. to noon.
- Host the Art Show and take down the art on Saturday, April 18, from noon to 4 p.m.

Please contact Candace Gorton at audubonomaha@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer for this important and popular event. If you have other questions, please contact Virginia at vstauffer1@yahoo.com.

Need seed? Here’s the scoop on our Winter Bird Seed Sale

by Betty Fullerton, Bird Seed Sale Chair

Running low on bird seed? Missed the Fall Bird Seed Sale? Stock up at ASO’s Winter Bird Seed Sale. Order by February 12 for pick-up on Saturday, February 22.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This year’s delivery location is changing to: John & Betty Fullerton’s garage at 11330 Spaulding Street (just off the West Maple exit on I-680). Look for detailed directions in your order pick-up email reminder.

Previous customers should receive an order form by email from fullertonj@cox.net by January 17. New customers, as well as those who have ordered in the past, can simply go to audubon-omaha.org between January 17 and February 12, and order online. Or download the order form and pay by mail. If you have questions, please call John or Betty Fullerton at 402-493-4362.

SEE ALL THE SEED & FEED AT AUDUBON-OMAHA.ORG JANUARY 17-FEBRUARY 12, AND ORDER FOR PICK-UP.

Thanks to all customers who made our 39th Fall Bird Seed Sale a success. Your orders of the high-quality seed that we offer provide vital support to ASO’s education and conservation programs.

Our tremendous volunteers are deeply appreciated. They include a mailing crew of Linda Cave, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Nelli Falzgraf, Betty and John Fullerton, and Kathy Schwery. Duane Schwery provided management of our mailing lists while Stacey Coury provided website management. Betty and John Fullerton handled the recordkeeping. Thanks to Kathleen Crawford-Rose and Bob Rose, Neal and Deb Ratzlaff, and John & Betty Fullerton for providing garages.

Unloaders & loaders included Elliott Bedows, Ruth Bentzinger, Scott Bradley, Mark Cave, Kathleen Crawford-Rose and Bob Rose, Meagan Deichert, John and Betty Fullerton, Mace Hack, Kayla Johnson, Tim Kautzman, Dennis Kingery, Clem Klaphake, Matt Miller, Chris Olson, Loren and Babs Padelford, John Pollack, Greg Prorock, Neal and Deb Ratzlaff, Al Reyer, Duane & Kathy Schwery, Melissa Sitze, Andy Miller, and Bobby Walz.

Kudos to Neal Ratzlaff, who has enthusiastically volunteered for all 39 years of ASO’s Bird Seed Sale.



Prevent window strikes — it's for the birds

The numbers are staggering. Somewhere between 100 million and 1 billion birds die every year flying into windows. That's the bad news. The good news? There are steps each of us can take to make it easier for birds to navigate what have become increasingly unfriendly skies.

WHY DO BIRDS FLY INTO WINDOWS?

Could be a matter of biology. Bird Life International notes that birds' eyes sit on the sides of their heads. The nearly 360-degree view enables them to detect potential predators, mates, and competitors but can prove lethal when they fail to focus on that pane of glass lurking dead ahead. Reflections of trees and sky compound the confusion as birds try to fly through glass to get to foliage or feeders – or attack the bird they see barreling toward them. After dark, unnatural light disrupts flight patterns, especially among migrating birds. Drawn to the light, they crash into buildings and even into other birds. Interestingly, resident species are not as susceptible to this hazard as migratory birds, perhaps because they're more familiar with the territory.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO TRY TO PREVENT WINDOW STRIKES?

- Install window screens. In addition to providing a physical buffer, screens diminish reflections – but they're effective at preventing or mitigating collisions only if they're installed *outside* the window.
- Change the way your windows look. Apply decals, bird tape, Acopian Bird Savers, or one-way transparent film to reduce reflections. Predator decals have not proved effective, by the way. To achieve optimal results, follow the directions included with the solution you land on.
- Go dark. Switch your lights off when you don't need them. Use exterior lighting to enhance safety, not appearance, at night.
- Move your bird feeder. Sometimes, moving your feeder closer to or away from windows encourages safer flight paths.
- Support bird-friendly building design. Audubon and other conservation organizations, such as American Bird Conservancy, promote architectural techniques that result in long-term solutions.

- Advocate for legislation. Whether you're arguing for bird-friendly design to be included in local ordinances or encouraging conservation, putting bird safety on legislative agendas can have a lasting impact.

HERE'S HOW TO HELP A CRASH VICTIM

Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology offers this advice for coming to the aid of a feathered friend who has flown into a window.

1. Examine the bird for external injuries. If its wings and eyes seem normal, watch it to see if it can perch in a branch without your help. If it can, your job is done.
2. If the bird's injuries are obvious, call a local wildlife rehabilitator, Raptors: Call 866-888-7261 to speak to a Raptor Recovery volunteer. Non-raptor: Call Nebraska Wildlife Rehab at (402) 234-2473. While you're on the way to the rehabber, put the bird in a dark container, such as a shoebox, to keep it away from pets and predators.



Photo compilation of birds killed by flying into windows of a specified group of buildings during a single fall season in Washington D.C.
Photos and composite image: Sam Droege USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab

I resolve to...combat climate change in 2020

by Elizabeth Chalen

Want more bang for your resolution buck? Here are three ways to make conservation count as you flip your calendar to the new year.

1. Reduce your consumption of animal-based foods, especially meat and dairy. Try “Meat-Free Mondays” and work toward making your meatless mantra a multi-day thing. By reducing your consumption of animal protein by half, you can cut your diet’s carbon footprint by more than 40 percent. If you’re already enjoying a vegetarian lifestyle, purchase locally produced foods as often as possible.

2. Need a new home appliance? Be sure to invest in energy-efficient appliances that reduce your carbon emissions and save money!

3. When the weather outside is frightful (and the nights never seem to end), energy consumption increases considerably to keep lights and devices on in our homes. Consider unplugging any electronics you don’t use overnight, and turn off lights in rooms you aren’t using. Try switching to LED light bulbs to save energy and money. Additional benefit: you’ll know exactly how many conservationists it takes to change a light bulb.

Board of Directors recap

by Virginia Stauffer, 2nd VP

OCTOBER FIELD TRIP: About 15 people joined Tisha Johnson for ASO’s spooky birding field trip. 30+ crossbills were logged and as many as 27 separate species were spotted, including Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches at Forest Lawn Cemetery. No owls, vultures or bats swooped into view, but we did see a few old crows.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Proposal has been submitted to Collective for Youth for after-school programming. They are optimistic about programming starting later this winter, and have submitted a grant request to fund our programs.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PROJECT AT LAKE ZORINSKY: To address concerns about homeowner encroachment, the Corps plans to cut back the tree line around the lake. The area near Bauermeister Prairie was discussed, and Bob Wells presented ASO’s concerns. For now, the project will go forward, as the National Corps has mandated that each regional office reduce fire risk along urban/recreational areas on all Corps-owned land.

NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP: Clem Klaphake led a group of 10 birders for leisurely birding at various lakes in Sarpy County. Among the winter visitors were Northern Shovelers, Horned Grebes, and a couple of Coots. Participants logged 22 total species.

NOVEMBER MEMBER MEETING: Kristal Stoner, Executive Director, Audubon Nebraska, presented the Audubon Climate Change Report to our members. The big take-away? Climate change is real and the solution begins at home, in your own backyard! ICYMI go to audubon.org

NEW EXECUTIVE ADMIN: Please join us in welcoming Candace Gorton to our organization. She is uniquely qualified and will be taking over the duties of Stacey Coury, who stepped down in the last quarter of 2019. Thank you, Stacey, for your many hours of hard work and your commitment to furthering the mission of Audubon Society of Omaha.

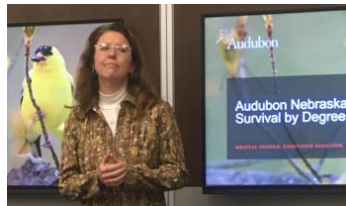


Photo by Shannon Engberg

RESOURCES & INFO:

HOW TO JOIN/RENEW/UPDATE

Join or renew your membership online at audubon-omaha.org and select “Get Involved.” Save paper and avoid confusion.

Your membership with National Audubon automatically makes you a member of Audubon Society of Omaha.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

Please call National Audubon toll-free at 1-844-428-3826, or send an email to audubon@emailcustomerservice.com

STAY CONNECTED

Sign up to get our email at audubon-omaha.org under “Get Involved.”

BEQUESTS & GIFTS

A bequest to Audubon Society of Omaha is a gift to those who will succeed us and secure our natural heritage.

Want to send a gift on behalf of someone? Mail your check along with the name and address of the person to be notified to:

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

We’ll send them a thank-you note letting them know of your gift.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS:

- We need volunteers for our 2020 Student Art Contest and Show. There are a wide variety of dates and times available. Contact Candace Gorton at audubonomaha@gmail.com
- Feeling strong? We need volunteers to help with our winter bird seed sale. Please contact John Fullerton at fullertonj@cox.net

TAKE ACTION

Big things are happening, so communicate with your elected officials. Go to audubon-omaha.org for links to contact info for each.

INJURED BIRD?

Raptors: Call 866-888-7261 to speak to a Raptor Recovery volunteer.

Non-raptor: Call Nebraska Wildlife Rehab at 402-234-2473.

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Omaha, NE 68103
audubon-omaha.org

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STEWARDSHIP OF THE EARTH AND ITS CREATURES

the Meadowlark

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Photo by Ron Hiatt

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.

CONTACT US AT:

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Omaha, NE 68103-3542
402-445-4138
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ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Bob Wells
Past President: Matt Miller
1st Vice President: Jackie Scholar
2nd Vice President: Virginia Stauffer
Treasurer: Betty Fullerton
Secretary: Shannon Engberg

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Ruth Bentzinger
Mark Cave
Elizabeth Chalen
Grace Gaard
Meagan Deichert
Christine Jacobsen
Michaela Johnson
Anne Maguire

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Art Contest: Virginia Stauffer
Education: Elizabeth Chalen
Finance: Betty Fullerton
Fundraising: Anne Maguire
Grant Review: Shannon Engberg
Legislative Affairs: Bob Fuchs
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Natural Areas Management:
Glenn Pollock
Nominating: Virginia Stauffer
Program: Bob Wells
Bird Seed Sale: John & Betty Fullerton
ASO Administrator: Candace Gorton
Executive Director, Audubon Nebraska:
Kristal Stoner