

A Bird's Eye View

**Audubon Society of Omaha
A Chapter of National Audubon
Society**

September 2001 Vol. 30 No. 7

Down Under With Lorikeets, Cockatoos, Petrels and Echidnas

By Clem Klaphake

The first program at the September 13 general meeting will be presented by long-time ASO member and past president Betty Allen. She will take us along on a trip she made to Australia with the Victor Emanuel Nature Tours.

Betty moved to Omaha in 1984 and since that time has held numerous positions in a number of nature-related organizations. She served as president of ASO for two years and on the board for ten years, president of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union for two years, president of the Fontenelle Nature Photographer's Club for one year, and continues her memberships and volunteer work today in these and other organizations.

Having had a long-time interest in many facets of the natural world, Betty has studied and attended workshops on birds, butterflies, prairies, botany and most issues deal

ing with the environment.

Though she has lived in Omaha for the past 15 years, she can't hide her Massachusetts accent. She earned her Masters Degree from the University of North Carolina in the field of Public Health. Prior to retirement, she worked as Chief Nurse and Executive Director of a home health agency.

Betty will share her three-week trip (and great bird photos) across Australia with us on Thursday, September 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hanscom Park Methodist Church, 4444 Frances Street. Along with the great variety of birds, you will see great photos of some reptiles and mammals.

Following the presentation, a short business meeting will be held. The evening will conclude with coffee, cookies and conversation.

Look for Warblers and More at Indian Cave Park Sept. 8

Indian Cave State Park is the destination of our September field trip on Saturday, September 8. Participants will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot, south side of Penny's, Southroads Shopping Center in Bellevue.

Dick Rasmussen and Duane Bright will lead us to the Park, which is about 80 miles south of Bellevue on the Nemaha/Richardson County line.

We will car pool down I-29 to the Brownville exit, Hwy 136, then just west of Brownville we will take Hwy 67 south to the park. Be sure to bring a camera, picnic lunch,

binoculars, and insect repellent.

We should see many early fall migrants including warblers, orioles, tanagers and other passerines on our September field trip.

Butterfly enthusiasts should see some zebra swallowtails and maybe the southern dogface. Monarchs are congregating and migrating.

A state park permit is required, and there is a one dollar toll at the Bellevue Bridge. Refer any questions to Dick Rasmussen, 731-3939, or Duane Bright, 291-6495.

Annual Bird Seed Sale October 20-21

Sally Hansen, Bird Seed Sale Chair, announces the dates for the 2001 sale. On Saturday and Sunday, October 20 and 21, we will be loading your bird seed for you from sites to be announced in a mailing to former customers and in the October *Bird's Eye View*.

A new kind of fundraiser.

A shopping event at
Younkers. A donation to
ASO that comes back to
you.

See "Have Our Cake and
Eat It Too," Page 3.

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Scholarly Notes

by Eric Scholar

A New Start

The new Board of Directors has

had its first meeting with several newcomers joining us. I appreciate their willingness to help by volunteering. That is the only way we can succeed as an organization.

I want to thank Garry Mick for his efficient and timely work in keeping the membership list updated and providing labels. Garry is passing these task on to others. Eunice Levisay deserves thanks for organizing a great picnic in July at the Rookery for ASO members. It was a lovely evening with fine food and congeniality.

Alaska in the News

This month and probably for the next few months, our 49th State will be in the news with respect to the energy bill before Congress, which will allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife

2% of America's annual oil demand, and there are other ways to make

this up, including conservation and new exploration and improved production techniques.

A second point is that the public doesn't want the drilling to be done at this time, with repeated polls showing 60-70% of the respondents wanting the Refuge protected. Apparently the word is out that such activity would put migration and calving areas for caribou along with the habitat of polar, grizzly and black bears, musk oxen and millions of migratory birds.

The writer summed up the editorial by stating that the ANWR is special. To exploit it at this juncture risks too much damage for too little return.

Needless to say, I was most pleased with the *World-Herald's* position. Unfortunately, the House approved the bill, which now goes to the U.S. Senate.

tors catch sight of the huge snow-and-ice-covered peak.

In Kenai Fjords Park we took a one-day wildlife cruise to a series of islands, home to many nesting pelagic birds. Along the way, we had great sightings of a humpback whale, porpoises, Stellers' sea lions and harbor seals. I added 16 birds to my life list (mostly Alcids). And we were excited to view several glaciers from up close.

Our visit also took us to two noteworthy museums, one in Seward. Funded partly by money from Exxon after the Valdez oil spill, it contains exhibits about the sea life of Alaska and a center for research into the rehabilitation of injured birds and mammals.

The Alaska Native Heritage Museum in Anchorage is an impressive place containing several outdoor habitat

Refuge. We will again be asked to write letters expressing our opinion about this crucial bill. (See article on Page 4) Some of you have already contacted your congressmen.

With respect to Alaska and the ANWR, I want to comment on the *Omaha World-Herald's* position on drilling in the Arctic. We have often disagreed with them on environmental issues, but a July 24 editorial, "Scrap the ANWR Drilling," deserves our highest approval. The editorial refers to President Bush's Energy Bill then in the U.S. House of Representatives. The writer believes much of the bill deserves passage, but Bush's desire to drill for oil and gas in the ANWR is misguided.

The writer's first point is that the amount of oil to be extracted isn't great. Estimates vary but the field is likely to be tapped at a rate of about

Vacationing in the 49th

In a somewhat related topic, Jackie and I spent 10 days in Alaska in July as part of our vacation. Although we didn't make it to the ANWR, we did spend some time in Denali National Park and Kenai Fjords National Park.

I am sure several of you have been there, but if you haven't traveled to Alaska yet, I highly recommend a trip in your future. We saw a very small area of the huge state. Both parks were quite beautiful, with many types of wildlife. In Denali we saw grizzlies, caribou, moose and Dall sheep as well as smaller mammals.

On our last day we were privileged to have a great view of Mt. McKinley. We learned that, because the mountain is usually in the clouds, only 25% of visi

exhibits relating to native Alaskan ethnic groups.

Alaska offers so much else, other parks and natural areas. I enjoyed the natural beauty of the places we visited. I fervently hope this beauty will be preserved.

Calendar

Sept 5 (Wed) Board Meeting

Sept 6 (Thur) Bird Club Hike Sept 8 (Sat) Field Trip

Sept 10 (Mon) Conserv/Legis. Meeting

Sept 13 (Thu) General Meeting

Sept 27 (Thur) Naturestudy

Oct 20-21 Bird Seed Sale

All About Hawks - Sept. 27 Nature Study and Oct. 7 Field Trip

By Clem Klaphake and Nelli Falzgraf

Clem Klaphake will lead a study group on hawk identification at the Rookery, Heron Haven, **Thursday, September 27, at 7:00 p.m.**

The session will prepare us for the **Sunday, October 7, field trip** to the Hitchcock Hawk Watch, to be led by Clem. The Hitchcock Nature Area is just

vantage of rising air currents and use the nearby Loess Hills as a migratory route.

Join Clem Klaphake to study slides of raptors **Thursday, September 27, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Rookery building, Heron Haven, and to view migrating raptors at the Hitchcock Nature Area on **Sunday, October 7.** Refer questions to 292-9687 or 292-2276.

Audubon Chapter Members' Retreat Saturday, November 3

An Audubon Chapter members' retreat will be held on November 3 at the Platte River

north of Crescent, Iowa, in the Loess Hills. The HNC asks for \$2 per visit or \$20 a year per person.

We will meet there at 9:00 a.m. If you wish to spend several hours, you may want to bring a lunch and drink. If the hawks aren't moving, we can hike some of the many nearby trails. The area is also good for migrants other than raptors.

Clem will pique our interest in raptors and the Hawk Watch with facts about these birds and their amazing skills. To maximize soaring, they use rising air currents or thermals, produced when the sun heats the earth and warm pockets of air rise above the cooler, denser air. "Obstructions" like the 200 ft. high Loess Hills of western Iowa produce updrafts from the prevailing westerly wind, keeping the birds aloft.

Many raptors are large, with wings and tails to match. The long wings of buteos like Swainson's Hawks and falcons like the Peregrine allow for excellent vertical lift. The broad wings of accipiters like Cooper's Hawks provide large surface areas in relation to weight, and that means less energy is needed to sustain flight.

The broad tails of eagles and hawks are used for air support and balance, steering and braking in the air.

With large size for stability in the face of upper level winds and the maneuverability honed by predatory skills, raptors are equipped to take ad

Whooping Crane Trust headquarters, north of Alda.

New local and national developments within Audubon and other topics will be discussed. Details will be given in next month's issue.



Have Our Cake and Eat It Too!

Younkers at Westroads has invited ASO to participate in their exclusive 2001 Holiday Benefit Sale fundraiser November 10. With each \$5.00 you donate to ASO between now and November 10, we of ASO will send you a \$5.00-off coupon to use during Younkers' Holiday Benefit Sale. In other words, 100% of the ticket sales will stay with ASO, and you can use your coupon toward a \$5.00 discount on a purchase of your choice at Younkers during their sale. ASO's Board has set our goal of ticket sales at two hundreds tickets at \$5.00 for a total of \$1,000. We can have our cake and eat it, too!

There will be no limit to the number of tickets you may purchase. If, for example, you would like to buy

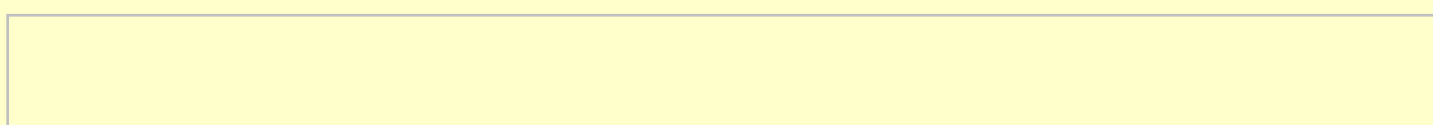
three items at Younkers, three tickets will be needed to receive the \$5.00-off each item. Customers of Younkers can also pre-sell, which means you can shop up to two weeks before the date of the sale (Nov. 10) and have your items held to be rung up as soon as the computer reflects the sale prices of the day. Customers may pick up their items on the day of the sale or any day after the sale if they make pre-sell arrangements with the clerk in the store.

Customers who come to the sale from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 10, will receive not only Younkers' lowest prices for the season but also complimentary food, performances throughout the store, and door prizes, and can participate in a silent auction.

Count me in! I want to help with ASO's fundraiser. Here is my donation of _____ to the Audubon Society of Omaha, 11809 Old Maple Road, Omaha NE 68164. Send me _____ coupons to Younkers' Holiday Benefit Sale.

Name _____

Address _____



Environmental/ Legislative Action By Ione Werthman

Been There? Done That?

How many times should we have

to call or write to our Senators and Representatives to make them understand that we do not want the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge opened up to oil and gas drilling? I have discussed this in previous newsletters. We've been there! But—have we done "that"? Did you do your part? *We've got to do it. One more time.*

All three of our Nebraska representatives—Doug Bereuter, Tom Osborne, and Lee Terry—voted *not* to protect our environment.

They voted to damage the unspoiled coastal plain of the Refuge. They voted to continue to allow light trucks to guzzle more gas than other passenger cars, and they voted to provide \$36.4 billion in tax breaks and subsidies to industries that provide oil, gas, coal, electric and nuclear energy.

Rep. Terry in one of his Public Pulse letters, *Omaha World-Herald*, August 8, stated, "This bill would allow exploration and development (on the Refuge) only after it is first proved that there would be no significant adverse effect on wildlife, their habitat or the environment in general. Accordingly,

cumulations in complex geological formations on the Refuge instead of one giant field like Prudhoe Bay. Because each drilling platform takes up as little as 10 acres, the 2,000-acre limit would allow oil companies to spread out over practically the entire Refuge.

Prudhoe Bay was once called the height of responsible drilling. However, since 1996, drilling results in spills and pollution at the Bay and the Trans-Atlantic Pipeline have resulted in an average of 427 spills of diesel and crude oil annually on the north slope. Three large oil spills have already been reported this year, resulting in over 13,000 gallons of crude oil being spilled.

These facts are telling me it is a myth that oil companies can drill and leave the area without a footprint. Prudhoe Bay is now the home to an industrial complex so large that astronauts report seeing it clearly from space.

Thus another question comes to mind. Do the roads in getting to the equipment count in that 2,000 acre total? What about airports, housing and buildings needed for the 700,000 new jobs that supposedly will be created as advocated by the Teamsters Union? Will they be counted in the 2,000 acres? You and I both know they won't be.

Oil drilling in Prudhoe

definitely will suffer from the rapid melting of their habitat. Several animal species are already mysteriously declining in Alaska, and some scientists are attributing this to warming trends.

That's why it is now up to us to convince the Senate to save the Refuge. It's likely the Senate will begin discussing its energy policy bill when they return to Washington in early September.

Please! Please! Once more - call or write again to both of our Senators:

Senator Chuck Hagel

U.S. Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Phone: 202-224-4224

Fax: 202-224-5213

Omaha phone: 402-758-8981

Chuck-hagel@hagel.senate.gov

Senator Ben Nelson

U.S. Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Phone: 202-224-6551

Fax: 202-228-0012

Omaha Phone: 402-391-3411

senator@bennelson.senate.gov

Join us for a new round of Audubon Environmental/Legislative Action meetings the rest of this year: September 10, October 1, November 5, and December 3, 7:30 -9:00 p.m. at the ASO office, Heron Haven, 11809 Old Maple Road.

Birdline

For an update on the sightings in the state, call 292-5325.

Report your sightings after listening to the tape.

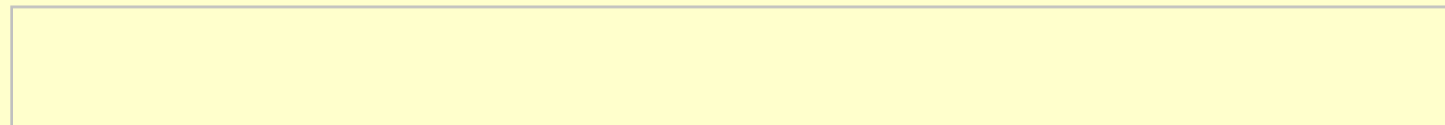
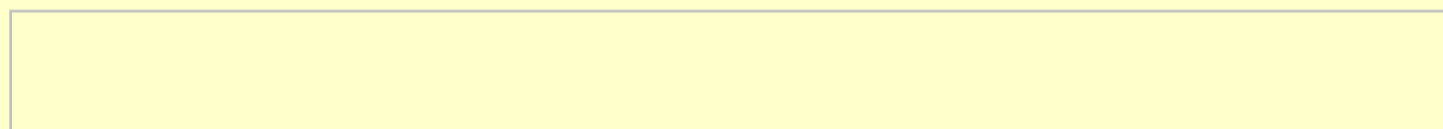
most estimates place the above-ground area affected by drilling at only 2,000 of ANWR's 19.5 million acres."

The problem with that rationality, as I see it, is that the 2,000 acres do not have to be contiguous. The drilling will not occur in just one 2,000-acre area but will be spread hither and yon throughout the whole area, with only the areas in which the equipment touches the ground to be counted in that 2,000 total acreage.

Recent U.S. Geological Survey studies conclude that potential oil reserves are located in many small ac

Bay also creates 43,000 tons of nitrogen oxides a year, twice as much as that of the City of Washington, D.C. Many argue, too, that petroleum geologists miss a larger point: that global warming from the burning of fossil fuel presents an even greater potential danger to Arctic ecosystems.

Polar bears may or may not be affected by seismic thumping, but they



A Walk at Spring Creek Prairie

By Mary Mick

peace and quiet, birds and butter flies, colorful spring wildflowers—a rare, preserved place with history and nature combined into one. The Audubon Spring Creek Prairie is such a place.

During the ASO spring banquet in May, Dave Sands, Executive Director of Audubon Nebraska, glowingly described Spring Creek Prairie, a place obviously close to his heart. His enthusiasm that night made me want to see it for myself.

In mid-June my husband, Garry, and I drove to Denton, 25 miles southwest of Lincoln, to this

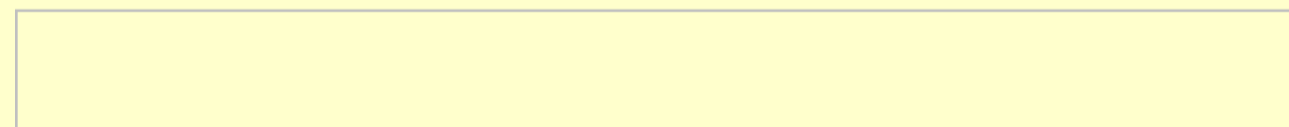
their lunch hour. They are most knowledgeable and eager to assist visitors. Autumn Fowler, Development Coordinator, told us the historical background of the park and its geological formation. The retreat of a glacier left the area strewn with boulders, making it undesirable to developers. The rocky terrain and rolling hills also discouraged cultivation. It was suitable for grazing and was owned by the same family, the O'Briens, from 1903 until 1998. The last family member, Kathie O'Brien, hoped to save her family's land from being subdivided into development acreages. She approached Dave Sands and Audubon

Marsh Hike & Talk with Bird Club

September 6

ASO is invited to join Jerry Toll and the Fontenelle Nature Association Bird Club for a trip and open-book duck discussion with mounted waterfowl as identification aids.

We'll meet at the FNA floodplain in Bellevue at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, September 6. Bring binoculars and binoculars. Call Howard Mattix (896-0352) if you have questions.



Vote to be Delayed on Discontinuance Amendment

A change is hereby made to the notice in the Summer *Bird's Eye View*, page 5, regarding proposed bylaws changes to our constitution, to be voted on by all members present at the September 13 general meeting.

The amendment to Article IX, Discontinuance (see last item, page 6 of the Summer *Bird's Eye View*) has been returned to the bylaws committee for revision and review by the Board and will be included in the changes and amendments to be voted.

All other bylaws changes will be voted on September 13, as stated on page 5, Summer *Bird's Eye View*.

peaceful place. A rare, never-cultivated 500-acre tallgrass prairie rolls over the gradual hills. The grass sways in the soft wind, spotted with the color of many wildflowers in bloom. The brilliant pink of purple poppy mallow and slender white spikes of prairie larkspur draw the eye across the landscape.

Nebraska about a way to save it. Audubon was deeply interested in preserving one of the largest remaining tallgrass prairies in the state. Its history added to its appeal. Grants and donations made way for the purchase. If you find an injured bird of prey, please contact a Raptor

Busy, hungry butterflies flutter through the grass or gather in a wet spot on the path. A variety of birds—Dickcissels, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Bluebirds, Eastern Kingbirds—cross the sky. Few man-made sounds disturb the peace of the natural world. A lonesome train whistle in the distance only adds to the atmosphere, and a jet overhead reminds us how lucky we are to be in this unique place in a busy world.

Recovery Center volunteer at 402-734-6817 A new nature center will be built in the future. It is hoped that an architect who will incorporate green construction will be found, so that the center will provide examples for visitors to adapt for use in their own homes, as well as tech them about the prairie.

If you need a respite from noisy city life or your hectic routine, take a drive to Denton and enjoy this successful Audubon preservation project.



The mowed grass trails are easy to walk, winding around ravine ends, over bridges, and through the prairie near the wagon tracks. Part of the cutoff from Nebraska City to Fort Kearny leading to the Oregon Trail rain through this prairie. Many wagon trains passed this way in the 1860's and left tracks which are still visible—one of the few places where they have not been erased by cultivation and weather.

Bluebird Monitors Need to Report

It is time for bluebird monitors to report their results to our coordinator, Jim McLochlin. A vital part of monitoring a bluebird trail is reporting the results. Lately many monitors have been neglecting this important task.

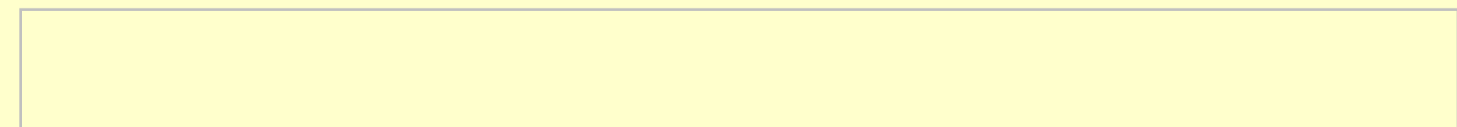
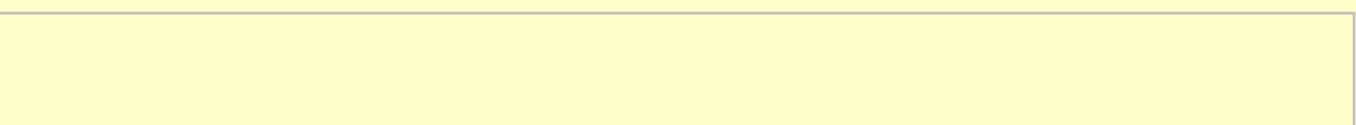
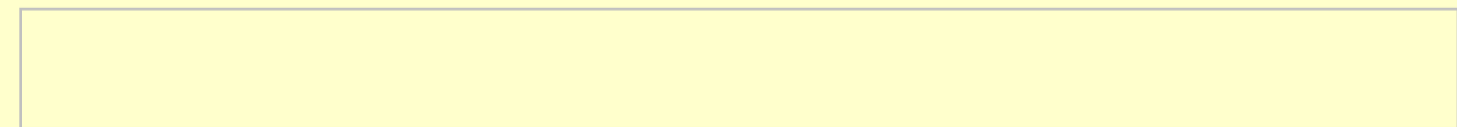
Some trails may no longer be maintained and monitored, leaving the

boxes open to competing species.

If you are presently a monitor, you need to call Jim, at 933-4638.

If you have maintained a trail in the past and have discontinued the trail, you also need to report to Jim so that the trail can be closed out to another person.

As we walked the trails, we met two staff members enjoying a hike during



The Omaha Raptor Team

A Committee of ASO



Has the Omaha Raptor Team finally hit the big time? That certainly seemed to be the case when we entered the city of Valley, Nebraska. Printed on the city marquee for all to see was one of the largest greetings we've ever received for a program!

Our feathered volunteers are well read, now that they've spent so much time this summer in libraries. This photo is just one example of the many reading programs we attended this

summer at area libraries. It's been a great experience to expand the circle of education to everyone. Our hope is for this knowledge to keep wildlife and the environment alive.



As the summer draws to a close, we'll start again this autumn with our classroom visits, allowing us the opportunity to meet and teach new people. In the meantime, finish your summer with safety and sun. See you soon.

Some mistaken beliefs are responsible for pet owners allowing cats access to birds and other wildlife. Some believe that feeding cats will deter them from killing, when in fact, cats often do not eat what they kill. Some believe allowing the cat to roam at night will reduce the likelihood of its hunting. In fact, cats have an advantage at night. They have excellent vision and birds at night are in a state of torpor, making them easy prey.

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nationwide have cats on the pre cats in the wild.

“ Encourage education programs calling for a pet cat to be kept indoors, enclosed outdoors or on a leash.

“ Promote education of pet owners to neuter or spay their pets; encourage pet adoption programs to require potential owners to spay or neuter the pet.

The Wildlife Society concludes by emphasizing that cat owners should take responsibility for their pets.

Cat numbers are great. Cats kill too many birds. Cat owners need to take action to prevent such kills.

Notes from Nature

By Jerry Toll

Peregrine Falcons: An Update on the Midwest Restoration Effort

over the years, ASO has been in

volved in many successful conservation efforts. The

preservation of Jensen Prairie and Heron Haven, the effort to restore and preserve the Platte and Niobrara Rivers, environmental education and being legislative watchdogs are just a few of the myriad ways that have consumed ASO's time and passion over the years.

Another program was the release of Peregrine Falcon chicks

(hacking) at these sites were unsuccessful along the lowland river sites of the Mississippi River.

However, since 1988, hacking attempts along the shore of Lake Superior were successful. The young Peregrines encountered overwhelming predation from Great Horned Owls and other predators. Meanwhile, Cornell University was demonstrating that young could be successfully hacked from urban skyscrapers and bridges, and the

There was no substantial difference in the adaptability of five of the seven surviving mixed subspecies that subsequently bred.

When the decision was made to begin urban release, no one wanted cities to be the permanent home of the Peregrine in the Midwest. It was hoped that eventually Peregrines would find a way to reclaim their historical cliff nesting sites in the Upper Midwest. That hope eluded the recovery

from the Woodmen Tower in downtown Omaha. ASO members, acting as surrogate parents, volunteered hundreds of hours between 1988-1990 observing the fledglings take their first tentative flights into the dangerous world of adulthood.

When the last chick was fledged, ASO's involvement ceased, but the success of the effort continues to this day. Every year since, a Peregrine has tried to nest on the Woodmen Building. The number of young successfully fledged through the years varied, as can be expected when you are dealing with wildlife.

According to Tim Sauter, who continues to monitor the Peregrines for the Woodmen Building, of the 31 eggs hatched, 19 have survived to fledge. Each young produced went into the pool of the Midwest population. On August 25, 1999, Peregrines were removed from the Endangered Species List. This year Zeus and Amelia produced three young after having stayed all winter.

The Midwest effort to restore the Peregrine Falcon population was led by a team at the University of Minnesota School of Veterinary Science. Dr. Pat Redig developed the recovery plan and initiated it. Peregrines historically nested in the Upper Midwest at cliff sites. Early attempts at releasing birds

Midwest effort shifted in large part to urban releases.

It proved very successful. It was easy to find the people and the money to bring an endangered and charismatic species recovery to cities all across the eight-state region of the Upper Midwest. Predation on the inexperienced fledglings was virtually nonexistent. There was a ready source of prey species in the form of city birds, although this was not the case in Omaha where migrant Yellow-billed Cuckoos were preferred.

Finding enough young to meet the demands of the recovery schedule fell to falconry breeders. To find and breed enough Peregrines successfully when the species was virtually extirpated from eastern North America proved a daunting task. The decision was made early that enough pure *anatoms*, the subspecies of the eastern U.S, could not be found. Therefore, lineages from seven subspecies were included to a lesser degree.

The Midwest recovery effort came under criticism for this action, because all of the other eastern releases were using only *anatoms*. The concern was that using other subspecies would adversely affect the long-term survival of the population. In their recently published paper, Bud Tordoff and Pat Redig state this was not the case.

plan until this year when, after a forty-year absence, Peregrines finally returned to nest at cliff sites along the Upper Mississippi.

Three factors, it seems, finally came together to make it happen. The Peregrine population continues to grow in the region. This led to fewer suitable breeding sites being available, forcing them out of the cities and onto the cliffs. The increased presence of adult Peregrines along the river over the last decade has challenged the dominance of Great Horned Owls, educating them to the need for coexistence.

The removal from the Endangered Species List was the result of a concerted, dedicated effort by many agencies, organizations, and individuals who pulled together to make it happen. The Endangered Species Act requires that any species delisted should continue to be monitored to insure recovery. The proposed Peregrine monitoring will consist of five surveys of 20% of the population every three years.

**National
Audubon
Society**

Membership
Application

The *Audubon Magazine* and your membership card will be sent to this address:

Name

Street

City State

If you find
an injured
bird of
prey,
please
contact a
Raptor
Recovery
Center
volunteer
at 402-
734-6817

Memorials

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

When sending your gift, please identify the person you wish to memorialize. Please also give the name and address of the person to be notified.

Addresses to Remember

President George W. Bush

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave N

Washington D.C. 20500-0001

Comments: 202-456-1111; fax: 202-456-2

Senator Ben Nel

U.S. Senate, Washington DC 2051

Omaha address: 7602 Pacific

Senator Chuck Hagel

U.S. Senate, Washington, D.

Phone: (202) 224-

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