

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.



December 2012

Volume 41; Issue 10

ASO is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society Serving Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa

December NO General Meeting

With the Christmas bird counts, uncertain weather and holiday festivities we will not have a general meeting this month.

New Director at Spring Creek Prairie

by Marian Langan
Executive Director, Audubon Nebraska

We are delighted to welcome Kristofer Johnson as the new director of Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. Kristofer started officially on November 7. His background in botany, landscape architecture, and land planning provide a great set of skills for our important work. Kristofer states, "I am thrilled to be joining Spring Creek Prairie and look forward to meeting all of the dedicated people involved in its success. I am very excited to further engage the community to be involved with SCP and build on your previous accomplishments. Thank you in advance for your assistance as we continue our efforts for tall grass prairie conservation."

Kristofer and his wife, Dori Johnson, have recently moved back to Kristofer's hometown of

Lincoln from Salt Lake City, Utah. Dori is working in the University of Nebraska's Office of Research and Economic Development.
Welcome, Kristofer!

Ames Christmas Bird Count DATE CHANGE

The revised date for the Ames count is Tuesday, Dec 18. Anyone interested in helping should contact Don and Janis Paseka at [402-727-9229](tel:402-727-9229) or paseka76@gmail.com.

DeSoto/Boyer Chute Christmas Bird Count

The DeSoto/Boyer Chute Christmas Bird Count will be held Saturday, December 29th starting at 8 am. If you are familiar with the count and would like to count birds in a particular area of the count circle, you may contact the quadrant captains listed below

DeSoto NWR Don and Janis Paseka at 402-727-9229
paseka76@gmail.com

Boyer Chute NWR Jer Toll at 402-453-9239 geritol48@cox.net

Hitchcock Nature Center Sandy Reinken at 402-545-5790
crazylady0@aol.com
Fort Calhoun and Nebraska-side

of DeSoto Jonas Grundman at 402-216-5413

jonaslevil@gmail.com

For more information or to be assigned an area, please contact Jer Toll at listings above. The results will be compiled at the Toll house with a potluck and soup.

Omaha Christmas Bird Count

The Omaha Count will be Saturday Dec 15. The quadrant captains are as follows:

Rick Schmid Glenwood
schmid_r@msn.com

Jerry Toll Plattsmouth
geritol48@cox.net

Loren Padelford Manawa
lpdfrd@cox.net

Clem Klaphake Fontenelle
ckavian@cox.net

Contact any of the captains if you are interested in helping or you can contact Betty Grenon at grenon925@aol.com

There will be a compilation potluck supper at Betty Grenon's house after the count. Captains will have the address & directions.

All Christmas bird counts are free!

Sewage Lagoons, Cemeteries, and Dumps

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If you told the average Joe you were going to visit the city dump or a sewage lagoon, he or she would look at you like you were insane. As odd as they sound, these places can be quite good for finding certain species of birds at specific times of the year. But really, why would anyone want to endure putrid water, smelly refuse, and tombstones?

First off let's take a look at sewage lagoons or water treatment facilities. Most folks wouldn't set foot in areas like this, but to a birder they can be fantastic places, chock-full a myriad of species. Some are even quite accommodating to birders. During spring and autumn, these places can be a haven for waterfowl and shorebirds. Even certain diving ducks such as Redheads, Canvasback, Ruddy Ducks, and Scaup find these areas quite accommodating. Certain sea ducks such as Surf, Black, and White-winged Scoters have been discovered in these small water bodies. In some instances they are host to vagrant species that have gone off course such as Tufted Duck and Eurasian Wigeon.



canvasback by Phil Swanson

Shorebirds can also be found here. These range from the tiny mouse-like hunch-backed Least Sandpiper to larger substrate-probing species such as Willets. Shorebirds will often be seen in a somewhat drier mudflat-like area of the lagoon. However some like Wilson's and Red-necked Phalarope can be spotted spinning around like a tops in the center of a deep lagoon.

Garbage dumps have an appeal all their own, especially with Laridphiles. These waste centers may attract very large flocks of gulls during migration or winter. Usually there are one or two common species such as Ring-billed or Herring. Occasionally a less common gull may be spotted such as the large pale-winged Glaucous Gull, or a frosty-winged first or second year Thayer's or Iceland Gull. In fact in years past a certain dump in extreme southern Texas was the most reliable place to find Tamaulipas Crow in the lower 48 states. This corvid, around the size of a Great-tailed Grackle barely reaches across the Rio Grande in its native range. In more recent years this species has completely ceased their annual visits to this dump.

Cemeteries I talked about in minute detail in my last article. Usually cemeteries have certain types of conifers planted which are attractive to winter finches. In fact this past month a large number of White-winged Crossbills with a smattering of Red Crossbills were discovered at Midtown Omaha's Holy

Sepulchre Cemetery.

Not only do crossbills find these places to their liking, but other finches such as Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins may discover a bountiful food source within the confines of a cemetery. Some species such as Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches may find this unique area of spruce and pine so accommodating that they may actually stay to breed.

However more than finches and passerines enjoy cemeteries. Some raptors such as Cooper's Hawks and various owl species find the lively food that this unique oasis attracts too good to pass up.



northern saw-whet owl at Fontenelle Forest

If you are interested in finding some good birds, check out some of these locations that are far beyond the ordinary. Then in a mixed crowd mention your escapades to a sewage lagoon, dump, or cemetery and watch the many bewildered faces!

Happy Holidays!

By Justin Rink

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MAC Boy Scouts Resource Roundup 2012

This is the fifth year the Mid America Council of the Boy Scouts of America invited us to their annual University of Scouting event held at Boys Town. The Resource Roundup is for troop leaders of 58 counties in Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota.

Other nature/outdoor organizations included the National Weather Service, Henry Doorly Zoo, Strategic Air & Space Museum, Omaha Children's Museum, Backwoods, Canfield's, and many scouting groups.

We informed of our Art Contest for Omaha area students, encouraged local troops to attend our monthly programs and field trips, and talked about helping birds with nest boxes.

Materials distributed included Audubon Adventures, other nature brochures/papers, information for a Bird Study badge, and tips to ID birds.

Our eye-catching DVD featured beautiful singing birds in forests and prairies. Our poster of bird migration showed diverse birdlife in the Americas. Suggestions of conservation projects posted by Ray Boice, and his posters of scout projects and badges drew the attention of troop leaders.

Staffers were Jackie Scholar, Ray Boice, Laurine Blankenau and Nelli Falzgraf.



Cardinal in the snow by Michael Mill

The Great Backyard Bird Count

The GBBC is Going Global!

We're thrilled to announce that in 2013, people from anywhere in the world will be able to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count! Save the dates so you can participate in the first worldwide Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), **Friday, February 15 through Monday, February 18, 2013.**

To make it possible for people everywhere to participate, the GBBC will be integrated with eBird, a citizen-science project created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society in 2002 that went global in 2010. Our partner, Bird Studies Canada, administers the eBird Canada portal. Benefits to the new and improved GBBC:

- **Global access:** participants will be able to submit checklists from any location in the world, and in four languages!

- **Precise locations:** More accurate GBBC location data will make your observations more useful and easier for you to track over time.
- **Year-round access:** Although the GBBC is a four-day project, you will be able to use your account to track your bird sightings year round in eBird.
- **Better visualization:** Interactive maps will allow you to explore bird observations in much greater detail than ever before.
- **Corrections:** If you realize you've entered erroneous information, you can go back into your reports anytime to make corrections or changes.
- **No dual-entry:** eBird users will no longer have to enter their information twice and can simply enter their GBBC counts via eBird.

We'll let you know when the changes are in place in time for the 2013 GBBC. Meanwhile, you can submit your bird checklists any day of the year at www.ebird.org. If you have never submitted a checklist to eBird before, you'll create a user name and password. You'll be able to use the same user name and password for the Great Backyard Bird Count in February!

from the GBBC newsletter Winter 2012

“It is in midwinter that I sometimes glean from my pines something more important than woodlot politics, and the news of the wind and the weather. This is especially likely to happen on some gloomy evening when the snow has buried all the irrelevant details, and the hush of elemental sadness lies heavy upon every living thing. Nevertheless, my pines, each with his burden of snow, are standing ramrod-straight, rank upon rank, and in the dusk I sense the presence of hundreds more. At such times I feel a curious transfusion of courage.”

Excerpt from the
Sand County
Almanac by
Aldo Leopold
1949



The winter is an excellent time to enjoy birds. The National Audubon Society estimates that 1/3 of the adult population feeds birds during the winter.

I frequently see chickadees, juncos, robins, and flickers. The jewel colors of the cardinal and blue jay along with a flash of yellow from the flicker make the grey days a little brighter. The fascinating hierarchy of the wild turkeys provides a fascinating study in the struggle to rise, with some birds never giving up the fight to be accepted by the group and others constantly fighting to gain one more step in the rise to dominance. The sound of a woodpecker or the songs of the birds in the trees remind me that as alone as I seem when out hiking, there is actually life all around me. The snow hushes the noise of the world, and the birds provide a private concert as I meditate and relax.

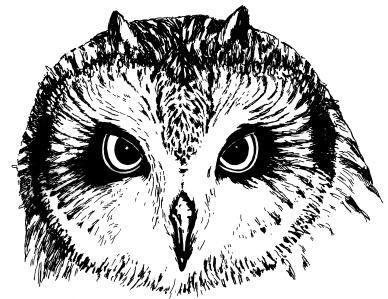
This winter do not forget to keep your eyes, and your ears, open as you go about your business. And while you go about your holiday festivities and the daily routines of your life including filling the bird feeders, don't forget to take the time to actually watch the birds that come to appreciate the bounty you are sharing with them.

by Jamie Vann

It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.

C.S. Lewis

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



**Raptor Recovery
Nebraska™**

Bequests

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

Addresses to Remember

President Barack Obama

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington D.C. 20500-0001
Comments: 202-456-1111

Senator Ben Nelson

U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510; 202-224-6551
fax 202-228-0012; Lincoln phone: 402-437-5246;
Omaha phone: 402-391-3411;

Omaha address: 7602 Pacific St, #205, 68114

Senator Michael Johanns

U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 202-224-4224
Lincoln: 402 476-1400

100 Centennial Mall N Rm 294, Lincoln NE 68508-3803

Representative Lee Terry

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-4155; Fax: 202-226-5452

Omaha Address: 11717 Burt St, Omaha 68154

Omaha phone: 402-397-9944

Representative Jeff Fortenberry

House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515
Phone: -202-225-4806

Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598

Lincoln Address:

Governor Dave Heineman

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848 Lincoln, NE 68509
Phone: 402-471-2244; Fax: 402-471-6031

Mayor Jim Suttle

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

Lincoln Capitol Switchboard: 402-471-2311

Washington Capitol Switchboard
Senate: 202-224-3121; House: 202-225-3121

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 68103-0542

We offer two choices of membership: one includes membership in National Audubon as well as in our local chapter, receiving the *Audubon Magazine* and our newsletter, *The Meadowlark*. A portion of the dues is returned to our local chapter.

The other choice is local membership only: this includes receiving *The Meadowlark* and participation in all of our local activities. Dues all go to our chapter.

Membership in the National Audubon Society

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Introductory Membership (1st & 2nd Year) \$20 Make check payable to National Audubon Society

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha
19612 Ridgeway Road
Plattsmouth, NE 68048 COZCP030Z

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19612 Ridgeway Road
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Audubon Society of Omaha Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3542, Omaha 68103 - 0542

Phone: 402-451-3647 - <http://audubon-omaha.org>

Office: 1941 So. 42nd Street, Omaha, NE 68105

Elected Officers:

President	Justin Rink	904-415-3282
1st Vice President	Jackie Scholar	551-5045
2nd Vice President	Laurine Blankenau	451-3647
Past President	Jerry Toll	453-9239
Treasurer	Dennis Kingery	556-9082
Recording Sec'y	Nelli Falzgraf	292-9687
Corres. Sec'y	Ann Boice	315-1884
<u>Elected Directors:</u>	Jamie Vann	733-1891
	Elliott Bedows	292-5017
	Jonas Grundman	216-5413
	Bob Fuchs	553-8242
	Tad Leeper	670-5919
	Eric Scholar	551-5045

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation	Bob Fuchs	553-8242
Education	Clem Klaphake	292-2276
Field Trip	Justin Rink	904-415-8279
Finance	Nelli Falzgraf	292-9687
Fund Raising	Vacant	
Membership	Kathy Schwery	296-4788
Program	Jerry Toll	453-9239
Natural Areas Mgt	Eric Scholar	551-5045
Publication	Jamie Vann	733-1891
	Laurine Blankenau	451-3647
Publicity	Jackie Scholar	551-5045

Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Chairs	Kathleen Rose	292-8912
	Carole Rasmussen	731-3939
Speakers Bureau	Eunice Levisay	393-0545
Historian	Eric Scholar	551-5045
NAS Board Member	Peter Cannon	608-251-1276

The Meadowlark is published monthly
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audubon-omaha.org](http://audubon-omaha.org)

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e-mail djschw@windstream.com.

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