

CAT PRINTS



Wildcat Audubon Society - Serving the Nebraska Panhandle

Officers 2014-15

Co-Presidents

Dr. Don Gentry
 Meredyth Gentry
 308-436-2495
 drdon21@embarqmail.com

Co-Vice Presidents

Donna Davey
 308-632-5767
 donna@cddavey.com

Secretary –Field Trips

Alice Kenitz
 308-436-2959
 akenitz@prairieweb.com

Treasurer–Editor

Field Trips
 Kathy De Lara
 308-632-3047
 renosmom@charter.net

Board of Directors

Chuck Davey
 308-632-5767

Ann Duey
 Field Trips
 308-632-3544
 dduey@actcom.net

Ruben Siegfried
 308-436-7859
 rubens69341@yahoo.com

Rod & Marie Smith
 308-632-1973
 mlou_smith@yahoo.com

Northern Saw-whet Owl
 Photos by Kathy DeLara

Northern Saw-Whet Owls Nesting in WCH

Wayne Mollhoff, Nebraska Breeding Bird Atlas Project Coordinator, put up Saw-whet Owl nest boxes in the Wildcat Hills and in the Pine Ridge area in 2012. The boxes in the Wildcat hills were put up on March 7, 2012. They were not used in 2012. Wayne found the remains of a Northern Flicker in one of the boxes on February 18, 2013 that was probably a screech-owl meal.



Wayne Mollhoff measuring one of the owlets



Adult at nest May 13, 2014

While checking the boxes on April 17, 2014 Wayne found 5 eggs in one of the boxes which he did not identify at the time. On May 10th, 2014 he was checking the boxes again and found 4 well-grown young Northern Saw-whet Owls in the box with an adult.

He did not have a camera with him that day so he returned on May 13, 2014 to document the owls and take pictures. On May 26, 2014 Wayne returned to check the owls progress and to measure and weight the owlets.

This is the first documented nesting of them in Nebraska.



Adult Northern Saw-whet Owl



Young at nest May 25, 2014

Interesting Sightings



Young Eastern Screech-owls seen near the Scottsbluff Library in July Photo by Marie Smith

- An adult and a young Broad-winged Hawk were seen in Wright's gap in August which suggests they may be nesting in the area. Broad-winged Hawks have been seen off and on in the Wildcat Hills for several years now.
- Sage Thrashers were reported in several places in Scotts Bluff and Kimball county in August
- Rufous, Broad-tailed and Calliope Hummingbirds were seen in several yards in July and August but not as numerous as last year
- Common Terns were reported at Lake Minatare September 1st
- A Canyon Wren was reported in Gotte Park in Kimball on August 31st
- Sharp-tailed Grouse have been seen in large numbers around the area of Stegall Road and Preston Road in the past few weeks
- Lewis's Woodpeckers have been observed by several birders in Sowbelly Canyon east of Coffee Park this summer
- A Cordilleran Flycatcher and a Brewer's Sparrow were banded at the Chadron banding station on August 30th

GREEN TIP Conserving Water

By Ann Duey

All life depends on water, however, in the United States we are polluting and using our water in an unsustainable manner.

The following are some tips to conserve water while watering the lawn.

Water the lawn! Position sprinklers to avoid paved areas and gutters.

Don't water on windy days!

Water your lawn only when it needs it. Step on the grass; if it springs back up when you move it doesn't need water. Most lawns only need 1" of water per week.

Deep soak your lawn. Put an empty tuna can on the lawn, when it's full you have watered enough.

Let the grass grow to 3" to help retain water.

Water during the early parts of the day. Watering early prevents the growth of fungus and reduces water loss to evaporation.

The Nebraska FLATWATER SEEKERS again competed in the Great American Arctic Birding Challenge sponsored by Audubon Alaska. And again (as last year) they came in first for the lower 48 states. The challenge is to ID/observe, in your home state, as many species of birds between March 1st and June 1st that breed in Alaska. This year the group was made up of:

Clem Klaphake, Bellevue, TJ Walker, Brady, Justin Rink, Omaha, Mark Brogie, Creighton, Kathy DeLara, Mitchell, Michael Willison, Lincoln

1st Nebraska = 122 species

2nd Montana = 116 species

3rd Washington = 106 species

<http://www.wyoneb.net/-delara/WildcatAudubon.htm>

www.facebook.com/WildcatAudubon

Kenitz Corner

By Alice Kenitz

Another summer nearly gone!!!! As usual, we had some really good field trips this summer. We started the field trip season with an early trip on April 5 to Kimball County. Kimball County with some help from Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory is developing some Watchable Wildlife trips as a way to interest local residents in the natural history of the county and also as an effort to attract tourists. We were lead through a number of pastures to look for prairie nesting birds. Although it was a little early to see many species, we all got to see a target bird, Mountain Plover. Hats off to Kimball County for this project!!

On May 31 we journeyed to Banner County. We had had a big rain the night before, so we changed our planned route to avoid some of the very muddy and slippery roads. Banner County has some beautiful areas, including Hackberry Canyon. There is a nice little lake there with some nice trees that attracted flycatchers such as Western Woodpecker, Cassin's Kingbird, Western Kingbird, and Eastern Kingbird. Some of the other nice birds were Cedar Waxwing, Spotted Towhee, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Orchard Oriole, and Bullock's Oriole.

We always enjoy visiting Gilbert-Baker and Sowbelly Canyons north of Harrison. In spite of the date of June 7, it was a chilly day and a couple of stops in Harrison for a warm cup of coffee were very welcome. We enjoyed seeing Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Sora, White-throated Swift, Lewis's Woodpecker, Great-crested Flycatcher, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, McCown's Longspur, Chestnut-collared Longspur, and Black-headed Grosbeak as well as many of the more common summer species.

One of our favorite trips is always to Crescent Lake NWR north of Oshkosh. We visited there on June 21. We found a number of duck species and several grebe species, White-faced Ibis, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Barn Owl, a family of Burrowing Owls, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. One of my personal favorites of summer trips is observing the many species of wildflowers. They were very abundant and beautiful, especially between Oshkosh and the refuge.

Our summer concluded with the annual August picnic—this year at the home of Rod and Marie Smith. They have worked really hard to have a beautiful yard. “Stars” of the landscaping were the butterfly bushes that were attracting several hummingbirds and sphinx moths. Food and fellowship were great as well.

Now we look forward to fall migration. Don't forget to check out the bird banding stations at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center and Chadron State Park on weekdays from September 2 through October 3.



RMBO Bird Banding Station at Chadron State Park
August 30, 2014

RMBO Bird Banding

The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory will have two banding stations running this fall. One at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center the other in Chadron State Park.

Holly Garrod will be banding birds weekdays from 6am until about 11am behind the WCH Nature Center which is located 10 miles south of Gering off Highway 71. There will also be a public banding day on Saturday, September 13th and she encourages anyone interested in birds to stop by the station and see birds up close in the hand.

If you are interesting in volunteering during the week you can contact her at hmg20@humboldt.edu.

Josh Lefever will be banding birds at Chadron State Park in the Sawmill Picnic Shelter.

The banding station will operate on weekdays, weather permitting, from sunrise until around 11am or noon. Visitors are always welcome, Josh looks forward to meeting some of you in the coming weeks. If anyone is interested in volunteering to help work at the banding station, please email him at jel260@gmail.com. The station will operate until October 10. Again, visitors are welcome to stop by anytime, but if you would like to volunteer for a more active role at the station, or have any other questions, please email him.

To get to the banding station, enter Chadron SP from highway 385, and take your second left once in the park. After turning, the road immediately splits into two directions- stay to your left. Follow this road for a while- it will take you up a large hill and past a few picnic shelters. Eventually the road will split again- stay to the right, and follow the road back down the hill. After going down a short distance, the station will be on your left, at the Sawmill Picnic Shelter. If you have any questions, you can stop at the park office for a map, and someone there can go over directions to the station

There is no charge to visit either banding station but a Nebraska state park permit is required.



Releasing an oriole at the Chadron banding station August 30, 2014

Calendar of Events 2014-2015

*Our meetings, field trips and events
are free and open to the public*

September 13, 2014

Scotts Bluff County Fall Bird Count, meet at 8am at Arby's in Scottsbluff. We should be back in town around 1:00 and may go back out in the afternoon.

This is also the **Public Bird Banding Day at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center**. They start banding at sun rise and continue throughout the morning. This is a free event but a Nebraska park permit is required.

September 20, 2014

General Meeting and Program at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm.

Kim Miedema, Education Director at the Riverside Discovery Center will be sharing about her experiences in the Peruvian rainforest this past summer and sharing pictures of the amazing animals, birds and insects that she saw. She'll also be sharing her stories and pictures of her time in Cusco and Machu Picchu.

September 27-28, 2014

Weekend trip to the Rocky Mountain National Park for an Owl Seminar and Banding of Boreal & Saw-whet Owls and more. The price for the seminar and banding is \$35 per person. Space is limited to 16 people. Contact Kathy DeLara at renosmom@charter.net or 308-631-2792 immediately if you plan to attend, payment is due to Kathy by September 15th.

October 18, 2014

General Meeting and Program at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm.

Johan Pretorius will present a talk on insects, their diversity, and biology.

Johan is a Ph.D. candidate in the entomology department at UNL. Originally from the city of Bloemfontein in the central Free State of South Africa, he and his wife, Henda, arrived in Nebraska during 2010 to conduct his studies

which focus on the sustainable management of the sugar beet root aphid on sugar beet in western Nebraska. Despite his work in agricultural entomology, he also has a very broad interest in insects and their biology in general. He is an avid insect photographer and has also undertaken numerous collecting trips to collect insects in both the United States and South Africa. Many organisms, but especially numerous bird species, rely on insects for their nutritional demands. Therefore, a better understanding of insects in general will, hopefully, spur an interest and appreciation for these all too often overlooked creatures which form the backbone of so many ecosystems.

October 25, 2014

Waterfowl and Cranes Field Trip. Meet at Arby's at 8am. We will bird the lakes and ponds and should be back around 1pm

November 15, 2014

General Meeting and Program at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm.

Amy Seiler, Community Forestry Specialist for the Nebraska Forest Service will give a presentation on Creating a Forest for your Trees.

We all know that trees grow well in the forest so why not try to create a miniature forest ecosystem in your own backyard. Learn some of the basic principals in developing a desirable place for trees to grow. This will be part presentation and part discussion.

December 20, 2014

Scotts Bluff County Christmas Bird Count. Meet at Arby's at 6:30am. This is an all day count.

For more information contact Alice Kenitz at akenitz@prairieweb.com or 308-436-2959

For meeting information contact Don & Meredyth Gentry drdon21@embarqmail.com 308-436-2495

To report bird sightings or for field trip information contact:

Alice Kenitz akenitz@prairieweb.com 308-436-2959
Kathy DeLara renosmom@charter.net 308-631-2792

Join the Wildcat Audubon Society

Membership dues are only \$5.00 per year and due in January

Your dollars help pay for CatPrints newsletter, Public Education and other projects through out the year

If you would like to continue to receive the newsletter by mail please send in this form.

If you want to have it sent to you by email, send an email with "CatPrints Newsletter" in subject line to Kathy DeLara at renosmom@charter.net



Wildcat Audubon Society
Membership 2014 or Cat Prints Subscription by Mail

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

There is no charge for the Cat Prints Subscription
I would like to receive my newsletter by email _____

If you would like to become a local member send \$5.00 to
Wildcat Audubon % Kathy DeLara
170188 Spring Creek Rd, Mitchell, NE 69357

NL-0814



Wildcat Audubon Society

c/o Kathy DeLara
170188 Spring Creek Road
Mitchell, NE 69357-5319