

# CAT PRINTS



*Wildcat Audubon Society - Serving the Nebraska Panhandle*

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## Kenitz Corner

By Alice Kenitz

It was a privilege to help a little at the Wildcat Hills Banding Station in September and early October. This year's bander was Melanie Mancuso from New Orleans. She banded 915 individuals of 36 species plus she recaptured 33 birds that had been banded in previous years.

The bird of the year was definitely Chipping Sparrow with 383 being banded. Others that interested me were the 194 Dark-eyed Juncos that were banded. The juncos showed up much earlier and in greater numbers than in previous years. Nine White-breasted Nuthatches were a surprise. Other birds of note include Cassin's Vireo, Mountain Chickadee, Pine Warbler, Field Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Cassin's Finch.

But the real star of the show was a Steller's Jay that was banded on September 25. It was pretty exciting to see this bird 'up close and personal' and to be able to see all the shades of blue feathers on this bird. And did you know that you can tell something about the age of a Steller's Jay by looking at the roof of its mouth? A mature bird has a black roof of the mouth. 'Our' bird was just getting a black mouth and was called a hatch-year bird. We know there are at least 2 Steller's Jays in the area. At least two have been seen in different areas of Scotts Bluff County, so we don't know if the birds are moving around a lot or if we have several birds.

The Steller's Jay and the Mountain Chickadee were the beginning of a nice list of mountain birds that invaded us this fall. We are blaming the forest fires of summer 2012. Evening Grosbeaks, White-winged Crossbills, Common Redpolls and even a Clark's Nutcracker were seen in the area this fall, although none of them appear to have stayed like the Steller's Jays and the Mountain Chickadees.

Snowy Owls are once again being reported in Nebraska, so keep your eyes open for them. Spring will soon be here. Who knows what exciting things are in store? Keep watching and let someone on the field trip committee know if you see something exciting.



Stellar's Jay by Marie Smith

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

## Christmas Bird Count Report

The annual Scottsbluff Christmas Bird Count was conducted December 15. Nationally, this is the 113th annual Christmas Bird Count. Locally, it is the 59th year. The Christmas Bird Count is done in over 2000 places across North America between December 14 and January 5 each year. Each count is done within a 15-mile diameter circle where counters attempt to count as many individual birds as possible.

The center of the local count is near Dome Rock.

There were 72 species and 23,924 individuals counted locally. In addition, five species were seen during the count week but not on count day-- Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Harris's Sparrow, and Red Crossbill. This is the first year that a Bewicks' Wren has been seen. Five species were seen in higher than usual numbers-- Greater White-fronted Goose 5, Redhead 31, Ring-necked Duck 71, Lesser Scaup 67, and White-breasted Nuthatch 10.

Other species seen include Cackling Goose 50, Canada Goose 11953, Gadwall 44, American Wigeon 135, Mallard 5899, Northern Shoveler 46, Northern Pintail 19,

Green-winged Teal 13, Canvasback 4, Greater Scaup 1, Common Goldeneye 103, Hooded Merganser 2, Ring-necked Pheasant 8, Wild Turkey 5, Pied-billed Grebe 1,

Great Blue Heron 3, Bald Eagle 4, Northern Harrier 7, Red-tailed Hawk 20, Ferruginous Hawk 1, Rough-legged Hawk 5, buteo species 1, Golden Eagle 2, American Kestrel 24, Prairie Falcon 1, American Coot 52, Wilson's Snipe 1, Ring-billed Gull 6, Rock Pigeon 357, Eurasian Collared-Dove 255, Mourning Dove 1, Great Horned Owl 3, Belted Kingfisher 9, Downy Woodpecker 16, Hairy Woodpecker 3, Northern Flicker 34, Northern Shrike 2, Blue Jay 50, Steller's Jay 2, Black-billed Magpie 25, American Crow 6, Horned Lark 80, Black-capped Chickadee 39, Mountain Chickadee 8, Red-breasted Nuthatch 12, Brown Creeper 1, Marsh Wren 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet 1, Townsend's Solitaire 41, American Robin 169, European Starling 1023, Cedar Waxwing 17, Yellow-rumped Warbler 1, Spotted Towhee 1, American Tree Sparrow 84, Song Sparrow 9, White-crowned Sparrow 65, Dark-eyed Junco 205, Northern Cardinal 2, Red-winged Blackbird 1561, Western Meadowlark 65, Common Grackle 1, Purple Finch 1, House Finch 222, Pine Siskin 196, American Goldfinch 330, and House Sparrow 431.

Photo by Don Gentry



Out of the 29 Christmas trees entered in the North Platte Valley Museum Christmas tree contest this year, the Audubon Christmas tree received the President's Choice Award. This award added \$50 to the \$53 received from the public votes. The chapter's team effort produced this special tree and thanks for everyone's effort. Donna Davey

### GREEN TIP

#### Simmer or Nuke?

Is it more efficient to re-heat on the stove or in the microwave? According to the EPA, a microwave is much more efficient because it takes 80% less energy to warm up relatively small amounts. The microwave needs a lot of electricity, but it's short bursts of power. At the present utility rates, heating a quart of soup on the stove costs approximately three times as much as heating it in the microwave. Cooking accounts for only 3% of total U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions from residences, but with electrical rates rising soon, every little bit we can cut matters. FYI: Per capita, Americans now use six times as much electricity and twice as much natural gas as they did in 1950.

## Area Christmas Bird Count Reports

**The Crawford CBC** was conducted Dec 22, 2012. We had a very pleasant day to do the count with little or no wind, temps in the 40s and no snow on the ground. In fact, the dry weather continues to be a factor in the area. The extended drought that began early in the summer was evident in the lack of weeds, such as sunflowers in the ditches and right-of-ways that provide cover and food for many bird species. The pastures were also shorter than other years, due to prolonged grazing and lack of moisture, one can only hope for snow and a wetter spring for all concerned. We did not find any Horned Larks, Robins, House Finches or Flickers this year. Historically, Flickers have never been numerous, but it was odd not to find Robins, House Finches or Horned Larks. We did find a high number of Turkeys, they seem to be doing quite well. We also found two flocks of Common Redpolls, they seemed to be feeding on the Russian thistle along the roadsides. Below is the complete list with 24 species for the day. Bruce & Donna Walgren, Casper, WY

Mallard - 6	Wild Turkey - 407	Northern Shrike - cw
Bald Eagle, Adult - 1	Rock Pigeon - 31	European Starling - 33
Bald Eagle, Immature - 1	Eurasian Collared-Dove - 50	American Tree Sparrow - 47
Red-tailed Hawk - 8	Downy Woodpecker - 2	Dark-eyed Junco - 67
Rough-legged Hawk - 4	Blue Jay - 3	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) - 3
Golden Eagle - 1	American Crow - 6	Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored) - 7
Merlin - 1	Black-capped Chickadee - 14	Western Meadowlark - 5
Ring-necked Pheasant - 34	White-breasted Nuthatch - 2	Common Redpoll - 73
Black-billed Magpie - 8	Townsend's Solitaire - 5	American Goldfinch - 3
		House Finch - 99



Snowy Owl near Harrison  
By Kathy DeLara

**The Harrison CBC** was held December 23, 2012. Without any snow on the ground at all, travel throughout the circle was not a problem, though the wind picked up and made the temps feel much cooler than the high of 47. Like the Crawford count, it was very quiet, usually while driving the backroads through this area you may hear a Chickadee or some other bird, and subsequently find other birds - not on this day. Kathy Delara made the trip up and found the Snowy Owl that she had reported earlier, and also had a lone Canada Goose flyover, both firsts for the count. We later located the Snowy Owl also (thanks Kathy!!). We found two small flocks of Common Redpolls feeding on Russian thistle along the roadsides. The 24 species fits with the average of 25 for this count, but the 361 individual birds is on the low side. Bruce & Donna Walgren

Canada Goose - 1	Snowy Owl - 1	American Robins - 16
Mallard - 7	Downy Woodpecker - 2	European Starling - 12
Bald Eagle, adult - 3	Hairy Woodpecker - 1	Dark-eyed Junco - 2
Bald Eagle, immature - 1	Horned Lark - 112	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) - 4
Rough-legged Hawk - 6	Blue Jay - 3	Dark-eyed Junco (Stale-colored) - 1
Golden Eagle, adult - 1	American Crow - 4	Lapland Longspur - 2
Golden Eagle, unknown - 2	Black-capped Chickadee - 7	Common Redpoll - 30
Wild Turkey - 30	White-breasted Nuthatch - 1	House Sparrow - 87
Rock Pigeon - 11	Pygmy Nuthatch - 4	
Eurasian Collared-Dove - 9	Townsend's Solitaire - 1	



# Calendar of Events 2013

## January 19th

### General Meeting and Program

Regional West Medical Center South Plaza Meeting Room at 7:30 pm. We will have an election of officers then Amy Seiler, Western Community Forestry Specialist for the Nebraska Forest Service, will present; Drought and fire: Impacts on trees and our friends that dwell amongst them.

## February 15<sup>th</sup>-18th

### Great Backyard Bird Count

Scotts Bluff National Monument will have field trips on Feb 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am to count the birds in the park. Watch the paper for more information. Check the GBBC website <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc> for information on how to count birds for this event in your own back yard.

## February 16th

### General Meeting and Program

RWMC South Plaza Meeting Room at 7:30 pm. Audubon Nebraska's State Director, Marian Langan will update us on what's new at Nebraska Audubon

## March 16th

### General Meeting and Program

RWMC South Plaza Meeting Room at 7:30 pm. Donna Davey will present a pictorial safari of Africa. She will be showing photos of wildlife and scenery from South Africa and Namibia from a recent trip.

## March 23<sup>th</sup>

**Waterfowl Field Trip** to the local lakes and ponds. Meet at Arby's in Scottsbluff at 8:00 am, we will have breakfast then carpool to the lakes, we should be back by 1:00.

## April 20th

### General Meeting and Program

RWMC South Plaza Meeting Room at 7:30 pm. Tammy VerCauteren, Executive Director of Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, will share information and stories about RMBO's conservation efforts including local work in western Nebraska. To learn more visit [www.rmbo.org](http://www.rmbo.org).

## April 20<sup>th</sup>

**Earth Day Celebration** Watch for more information

## April 27<sup>th</sup>

### Kiowa WMA Field Trip.

Meet at Arby's in Scottsbluff at 7:00 am. We should be back by 1:00

## May 11<sup>th</sup>

### Scotts Bluff County Spring Bird Count & International Migratory Bird Day

Meet at the RCI building at 27<sup>th</sup> and Ave I, Scottsbluff at 6:00 am, we should be back by 1:00, we might go back out in the afternoon to continue the count

## May 18<sup>th</sup>

### Free Nebraska State Park Entry Day Wildcat Hills Wildland Day

8K fun run, nature/bird hikes, kids crafts and much more. For more information contact the Wildcat Hills Nature Center 308-436-3777

## June 1st

### Hudson-Meng Area Field Trip

Meet at the RCI building at 27<sup>th</sup> & Ave I, Scottsbluff at 6:00 am, we will have lunch at the Cookshack Cafe and be home late afternoon. Please RSVP for this trip.

## June 15<sup>th</sup>

### Bridgeport Field Trip

Meet at the Fresh Foods Grocery store, 10<sup>th</sup> & M St. in Gering at 6:00 am. We will meet Luke Hamilton in Bridgeport and he will lead us on a field trip to his favorite birding sites in the area. Bring a sack lunch. We should be home mid-afternoon.

## June 22<sup>nd</sup>

### Crescent Lake Field Trip

Meet at the Fresh Foods Grocery store in Gering at 6:00 am. This is one of our favorite field trips. Bring a sack lunch and drinks, we will be home late.

## August 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>

**Nebraska Master Naturalist Program** at Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford. If you want to become a master naturalist don't miss this training, they rarely have it in our area For information go to the website at <http://snr.unl.edu/naturalist/apply.asp>

## August 18<sup>th</sup>

### Wildcat Audubon Annual Picnic

The picnic will be held at Dave and Ann Duey's, 90152 Enterprise Drive, Scottsbluff at 5:00 pm. Bring a covered dish, table service and a lawn chair

## September 14<sup>th</sup>

### Bird Banding at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center

This is a great chance to see birds up close, the banding will begin shortly after sunrise and continue through-out the morning. A state park permit is required

# Calendar of Events 2013 *(continued)*

## **September 21st**

### **General Meeting and Program**

RWMC South Plaza Meeting Room at 7:30 pm.

The program will be given by Mace Hack, The Nature Conservatory's executive director for the State of Nebraska

## **September 28th**

### **Scotts Bluff County Fall Bird Count**

Meet at Arby's at 7:00 am; we should be back by 1:00

Sept/Oct? (date to be decided later by attendees)

### **Weekend trip to the Rocky Mountain National Park**

for an Owl Seminar and Banding of Boreal & Saw-whet Owls and more. We will need a minimum of 6 people to do this trip, please let us know if you are interested in attending. For information please contact someone on the field trip committee and visit the website at

<http://www.rmna.org>

(look at the Oct. 5th banding seminar for information on the seminar)

## **October 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Fall Crane and Waterfowl Field Trip** to local lakes and ponds. Meet at Arby's at 8:00 am, we'll be back by 1:00

## **October 19th**

### **General Meeting and Program**

Regional West Medical Center South Plaza Meeting Room at 7:30 pm. Program TBA

## **November 16th**

### **General Meeting and Program**

Regional West Medical Center South Plaza Meeting Room at 7:30 pm. Program TBA

## **December 14<sup>th</sup>**

### **Scottsbluff Christmas Bird Count**

Meet at Arby's at 6:30 am, we will return for lunch then go back out to count in the afternoon.

Please contact coordinator, Alice Kenitz 436-2959, [akenitz@prairieweb.com](mailto:akenitz@prairieweb.com) if you would like to help with the count. If you live within the count circle you can be a feeder watcher for the count day.

**For additional information on field trips contact**

**Kathy DeLara 308-631-2792, [renosmom@charter.net](mailto:renosmom@charter.net)**

**Alice Kenitz, 308-436-2959, [akenitz@prairieweb.com](mailto:akenitz@prairieweb.com)**

**Ann Duey, 308-632-3544, [dduey@actcom.net](mailto:dduey@actcom.net)**



Sandhill Crane by Marie Smith

## **Rivers and Wildlife Celebration**

The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration will be held March 21-24 in Kearney, Nebraska, the sandhill crane capital of the world. Organized by Audubon Nebraska, the conference gathers together nature enthusiasts from across the country to witness the migration of over half a million sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl and other birds through central Nebraska. Events include guided field trips to local birding hotspots; the Wild Experience Room, with live raptor and reptile presentations on Saturday, which are free to the public; and daily visits to river blinds operated by Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary for up-close views of cranes roosting on the Platte River.

Local and national speakers will present information on a variety of wildlife and conservation topics.

Keynote speakers are author, wildlife biologist, and falconer Dan O'Brien; and Noppadol Paothong, staff photographer at the [Missouri Department of Conservation](http://Missouri Department of Conservation).

Registration materials can be found beginning in January at [nebraskacranefestival.org](http://nebraskacranefestival.org). For more information, call or write Audubon Nebraska: [Nebraska@audubon.org](mailto:Nebraska@audubon.org); 402/797-2301. Rowe Sanctuary has information about viewing the sandhill crane migration, 308/468-5282; [rowe.audubon.org](http://rowe.audubon.org).

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