

CAT PRINTS



Wildcat Audubon Society - Serving the Nebraska Panhandle

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Kenitz Corner

By Alice Kenitz

Some of us have enjoyed getting out and about in the Panhandle in June. The pastures and wildflowers have all been spectacular. And we haven't had to change any plans because of flooded roads. This is the sixth and final summer to gather data for the Nebraska Breeding Bird Atlas II project. There are many 'breeding bird atlas blocks' across the state, and the purpose of the atlas project is to find evidence of birds nesting in these areas. We've enjoyed visiting many new areas these last few years. This June we birded in atlas blocks in Scotts Bluff, Garden, and Kimball Counties. We were surprised to find so many Dickcissels, Cassin's Sparrows, and Lark Buntings. Some of the more unusual species in these counties have been Ferruginous Hawks, Great Egrets, Bell's Vireos, Northern Mockingbirds, White-faced Ibis, Osprey, Brewer's Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows, and Great-tailed Grackles.

The last Saturday of June we visited Smith Lake in Sheridan County north of Lakeside. This was a 'just-for-fun' trip as the atlas work in that area was already pretty much done. We saw baby Eared Grebes riding on the backs of the adults as they swam, Black-necked Stilts, Black Terns, Hairy Woodpeckers feeding young, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Bluebird, and Bobolinks, among other species. The biggest find of the summer were possible Black-backed Woodpeckers at Smith Lake. These would be the first of their species reported in Nebraska. On the way home from Smith Lake, we took a little side trip to visit the grave of Mari Sandoz, and the home and orchard of her father, Old Jules Sandoz.

Exciting birds 'at home' include at least seven Mississippi Kites in the area of 20th and Avenue C in Scottsbluff.

There has been at least an attempt at nesting for Ospreys in the area and a couple of new Bald Eagle nest locations have been found.

We're all keeping our eyes open for rareties in the late summer & fall, and look forward to more good birding outings in September and October.

Hope to see you then!!!!



Mississippi Kite

Wildcat Hills Nature Center Programs

The Wildcat Hills is proud to present several weekend events throughout this year! A valid Nebraska State Park Sticker is required on all vehicles.

For more information about these programs please contact the Wildcat Hills Nature Center at 308-436-3777 or ngpc.wildcat.hills@nebraska.gov

Saturday, August 13, 2011

9:00am-Birds of the Wildcat Hills

Come along on a bird hike, where we will explore the birds that call the Wildcat Hills home. Learn about field marks, bird songs, and much, much, more! This program is great for birders of all levels! Complete your very one craft to help birds in your own backyard. Meet at the Nature Center. Cost \$2/craft.

11:00am-Raptors

Learn about the birds of prey found in western Nebraska. We will talk about their special adaptations, field marks, and behaviors. This program is FREE! Meet at the Nature Center.

Saturday, September 17, 2011

The educational bird banding stations will be back in full swing during the month of September. If you are interested in volunteering during this event, please contact Amanda Filipi at 308-436-3777. A special weekend event will take place on Saturday, September 17th (time to be announced at a later date) at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center. See the birds up close, learn about the banding process and talk to a certified bird bander about their experience! This is a great opportunity to see the bird in the hand!

Saturday, October 29, 2011

1:30pm-Fall Festival

Come join us for a wonderful Fall Festival! Take part in the pumpkin roll competition, pumpkin carving contest, fall crafts and much more! The pumpkin roll contest will begin at 1:30pm with a cost of \$2/pumpkin. The pumpkin carving contest will begin at 2:30 with a cost of \$3/pumpkin. Prizes awarded for the different age brackets in each contest. All ages welcome.

**See the back page for details on
Wildcat Audubon membership**

VACATION GREEN TIPS

Finally summer has arrived. If you are still in the planning stages of your vacation, consider taking the train to your destination. The train is the most efficient means of travel because trains pollute the least. If you are driving, observe the speed limit to conserve on gas. Every 5 mpg over 60 costs an additional \$0.24 per gallon. (based on \$3.85 per gallon)

Maybe this is the year for you to take a “staycation,” a day trip when you travel only far enough to allow you to return home by night. *The Star-Herald* has been offering many suggestions of nearby sights to visit. However, if you are spending nights in a motel, be sure to save energy by re-using sheets and towels, and when leaving the room, turn off lights, the air conditioner, and TV. Closing the drapes is another way to save energy.

Shopping for souvenirs is a favorite vacation pastime, but pass on the tourist trap items from China, which require a lot of energy to transport. Instead, purchase local goods such as crafts, art, and cooking ingredients.

Another way to appreciate the area you are visiting is to eat locally grown foods. If you are renting a car, choose a hybrid or compact. At your destination either walk or take public transportation if possible. When you visit a museum, national park, or other place of interest, take only the number of brochures or maps you need; then return or re-cycle ones you don't want to keep.

To go above and beyond, pick up not only your litter but one other piece as well. By following one or more of these tips, you can make your vacation a little greener.

RECYCLE

Bring your aluminum cans to any Wildcat Audubon event or meeting. Please bring your ink jet cartridges to the meetings, we will no longer be paid for the ones sent in the envelopes, but they will still be recycled by the company. Proceeds from recycling are used for community education.

Calendar of Fall/Winter Events 2011

August 14th

Annual Picnic at Bob and Kathy DeLara's, 170188 Spring Creek Rd, Mitchell on Sunday afternoon at 5pm. Bring a covered dish, table service and lawn chair. For more information call Bob or Kathy at 632-3047

September 17th

Scotts Bluff County Fall Bird Count
Meet at Arby's at 7am, we should be back by 1:00

September 17th

General Meeting, RWMC South Plaza 7:30 pm
Platte River Basin Environments (PRBE) is a non-profit, conservation organization based out of Scottsbluff. Steve Knode, Wildlife Biologist, has assisted PRBE as an advisor for the past 15 years. Working with dozens of partner organizations, PRBE has acquired 30,000 acres over the past 20 years. These lands are open to many public uses. This presentation will discuss what lands are now open to the public, where they are located and how they are being managed for the benefit of wildlife.

September 23rd-25th

Nebraska Ornithologists Fall Meeting, will be held at Rowe Sanctuary near Kearney for more information, <http://www.noubirds.org>

October 15th

General Meeting, RWMC South Plaza 7:30 pm
When people think about Australia, their thoughts generally turn to kangaroos, koala bears and desert. However, northeastern Australia is home to the remnants of a rainforest that once covered much of the continent: upland and lowland rainforest ecosystems teeming with plant and animal life. Many species that live here are found only here and in neighboring Papua New Guinea. Maggie Vinson spent nearly two years living and studying in the rainforest of Australia. Join her to learn about this amazing place and see photos of the landscapes, people and wildlife.

October 22nd

Field trip for waterfowl, cranes and other birds, meet at Arby's at 8am, we should be back around 1:00

November 19th

General Meeting, RWMC South Plaza 7:30 pm
Discover the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program
Annabel Lee Major, Nebraska Master Naturalist Program Coordinator, will be telling us about The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program that will take you into the field to learn hands-on about Nebraska's natural resources, and lets you create your own volunteer experience, while rewarding you for your contribution to your community. Master Naturalists are landowners, teachers, professionals, guides, college students, parents, retirees, and role models. If you have an interest in leading education programs, conducting breeding bird surveys, mentoring hunter and anglers, volunteering in parks and zoos, or teaching your family and friends about the great outdoors, this program is for you.
Participants will engage in sixty hours of in-depth training, led by Nebraska's experts, learning about Nebraska ecosystems, plants and animals, conservation biology, and so much more! Explore Nebraska alongside scientists, faculty, and natural resource professionals. Contribute your time and expertise through exciting volunteer opportunities in habitat and wildlife conservation, environmental education, and citizen science. Most importantly, connect with Nebraskans who share your passion for nature.

December 17th

Scottsbluff Christmas Bird Count, meet at Arby's at 6:30am, for more information contact Alice Kenitz

All of our meetings, field trips and other events are free and open to the public.

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

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