

CAT PRINTS



Wildcat Audubon Society - Serving the Nebraska Panhandle

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Kenitz Corner

By Alice Kenitz

The fall meeting of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union (NOU) that was held in Bridgeport on September 20-22 was just great!! Kathy DeLara did a wonderful job making all of the arrangements at the Prairie Winds Community Center.

Our field trips took us to areas in Kimball, Banner, Scotts Bluff, Sioux, Morrill, Dawes, and Garden counties where we found over 170 species. Birders from the east were especially excited to find Pinyon Jays, Cassin's Vireos, Red-naped Sapsuckers, Lesser Goldfinches, and Cassin's Kingbirds.



Pinyon Jays at Connie Hoffman's Ranch in Morrill County taken by Kathy DeLara

I was privileged to be able to help at the Wildcat Hills Banding Station again this fall. Birds were kind of scarce this year, but it was fun to see the birds that were banded.

Pine Siskins, one of the most common birds banded about 6 years ago, were totally absent this year. After an increased number of Dark-eyed Juncos and nuthatches (of all three species) last year, these species were also in short supply. It's hard to know just what causes such fluctuations in bird species and in bird numbers, but our unusual weather in late summer and early fall no doubt has had some effect on what birds have been around.

Another unusual 'non-find' this fall was the lack of Sandhill Cranes on our annual Waterfowl and Sandhill Crane field trip on October 19. Normally we see several flocks flying over as well as a number of birds on the ground. This year we only had one flock of cranes flying in the distance and none at all on the ground.

We should be seeing an increasing number of species and individuals as the weather gets colder and as birds come to our backyard feeders. It's always fun to find the first birds of a new season. So keep an eye on your backyard feeders and let us know if you see anything unusual.

Interesting Sightings

Two Mountain Chickadees were seen at Rod and Marie Smith's in Gering on October 22-23. Below is a picture of one taken by Marie Smith.



Bob and Kathy DeLara have a Rocky Mountain (aka Interior West) subspecies of Hairy Woodpeckers coming to their feeders. She has been around since February. Notice how few white spots she has on her wings and the ones she does have are very small.



This Hairy Woodpecker is the typical type that would be seen in our area. Face patterns are variable in both types. Woodpecker pictures were taken by Kathy DeLara in their yard.

GREEN TIP

Dangers of Reusable Bags

Reusable bags are good for the environment but can be bad for your health. Researchers at the University of Arizona and Loma Linda surveyed shoppers with reusable bags. Of the 84 bags they tested, all but one had “whopping” amounts of bacteria; E. coli was found in 12% of the bags. Contamination occurs when the same bags are used for both meats and fruits and vegetables, either together or between uses. Three-fourths of the shoppers didn't use separate bags for uncooked meats and veggies and fruits, most commonly eaten raw. Most people store their bags in their trunks, which are a warm, dark place perfect as a breeding ground for bacteria.

Reusable bags aren't self-cleaning, but must be washed regularly. The researchers learned 97% of the shoppers in their survey didn't wash their bags regularly. Experts say to treat bags like dirty underwear. Washing bags either by hand or in the washer is effective and reduces bacteria to nothing.

Don't give up your reusable bags! Just follow the simple solution of regularly laundering them to get rid of the potentially harmful bacteria.

(editor's note: I wash mine in the washer all the time and they come out great. Take out the bottom insert if there is one and clean by hand then hang bag and insert to dry)

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Calendar of Events Winter 2013-2014

November 16th

General Meeting and Program at the Regional West Medical Center 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, on the Natural History of Bhutan.

We do not have a meeting in December

December 2nd

Christmas Tree Decorating at Legacy of the Plains Museum. Meet in the lobby at 2:30 to help decorate the Wildcat Audubon tree. Bring bird related decoration and ornaments if you like, we will decide which to use while decorating. All ornaments will be returned when the tree is taken down in January.

Museum visitors will vote on their favorite trees with donations for the museum. Last year we won the Presidents Choice Award for our tree.

December 14th

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 308-436-2959 or 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. A map of the count circle can be found on the NOU website at <http://noubirds.org/Documents/CBCMaps/ScottsbluffCBCMap.pdf>

We just received a new shipment of the Equal Exchange chocolate bars. They are available to purchase for \$3.00 each at the meetings; or contact Ann Duey at 308-632-3544 to make other arrangements to purchase yours.

December 21st

Crawford Christmas Bird Count

For meeting time and place contact Bruce or Donna Walgren at 307-234-7455 or email Piranga@bresnan.net

December 22nd

Harrison Christmas Bird Count

For meeting time and place contact Bruce or Donna Walgren at 307-234-7455 or email Piranga@bresnan.net

December / January

Lake McConaughy Christmas Bird Count

Date and time TBA

For information contact Steve Dinsmore at 515-294-1348 or cootjr@iastate.edu

For up to date information on all the Nebraska Christmas Bird Counts check the NOU website at <http://noubirds.org/> click on Activities then Christmas Bird Counts. For general CBC info go to the Audubon website at: You can also register online to help with counts.

<http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

January 18th

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

Justin Haag, the panhandle's regional editor for Nebraskaland and a public information office for the Nebraska Games and Parks Commission will give a program.

February 15th

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

Program TBA

For additional information on field trips contact; Alice Kenitz, 308-436-2959, akenitz@prairieweb.com Kathy DeLara 308-631-2792, renosmom@charter.net or Ann Duey, 308-632-3544, dduey@actcom.net

Join the Wildcat Audubon Society

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