



Wachiska Audubon Society's vision: To share the experience and love of nature—that life may flourish in all its natural diversity.

# The Babbling Brook

Our 43rd Year of Protecting Nature 1973 - 2016

MAY 2016

Volume 25 - Issue 5

General Meeting — Thursday, May 12, 7:00 p.m., Union College Dick Auditorium, 3800 South 48th Street, Lincoln

## The Now and One-time Grouse of Nebraska

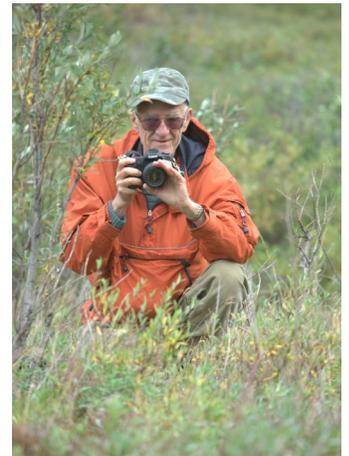
by Dr. Paul A. Johnsgard

As a mostly prairie state, Nebraska is host to some of the largest populations of grassland grouse in the U.S. It very possibly has the largest population of greater prairie-chickens, and is probably the only state with both a population of at least 100,000 birds and one that is not in a state of significant decline. Our population of sharp-tailed grouse is of roughly comparable size, although neither species is now being surveyed adequately by state agencies to allow for any numerical estimates of statewide populations. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission estimates that about 100,000 prairie-chickens have located in the Sand Hills (1997); sharp-tail numbers in the state are probably similar. By comparison, in 1874 an estimated 300,000 prairie-chickens destined for eastern cafes were shipped out of 30 counties in eastern Nebraska, and 20,000 birds were killed or trapped that year by market hunters in Pawnee County alone.

Three other grouse also occurred in Nebraska at one time. The ruffed grouse once extended up the Missouri valley at least to the Omaha area, noted by early explorers such as Lewis and Clark. The species was probably eliminated from the state by 1900. Greater sage-grouse may have nested once in extreme

northwestern Nebraska where sage occurs locally, but there are no state nesting records and few sightings. Likewise, the lesser prairie-chicken occurred in southwestern Nebraska into the early 1900s. There are at least three specimens from Red Willow County from the 1920s.

At Wachiska Audubon's May 12 general meeting, I will illustrate my talk with photos and drawings of these species and describe their remarkable courtship activities.



Dr. Paul A. Johnsgard

Paul A. Johnsgard is Foundation Professor of Biological Sciences Emeritus at the University of Nebraska. He has received the Distinguished Teaching Award, Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Award, and an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from UNL. He also was awarded a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and four national conservation awards in recognition of his ornithological writing and conservation work. In 1984, during the chapter's first awards banquet, Paul was recognized for outstanding support to Wachiska during its first ten years. Then in 1993, the Earthkeeper Award was presented to Dr. Johnsgard as a prolific author, researcher, and educator in the field of ornithology. To date Johnsgard has written over 80 scholarly books and monographs. He is also a photographer and has illustrated his writings with thousands of his personal photos and drawings.

Join Wachiska on **Thursday, May 12, at 7:00 p.m.** for this free public presentation in the Union College Dick Auditorium, 3800 South 48<sup>th</sup> Street, in Lincoln. Free parking is available on 48<sup>th</sup> Street and in the church parking lots. Look for Audubon signs on the doors. There is a ramp at the east entrance and an elevator inside. Refreshments will be served after the program.

### Calendar

#### May

- 2 Education Committee, Wachiska office, 6:00 p.m.
- 3 Board Meeting, Wachiska office, 7:00 p.m.
- 12 General Meeting, "Grouse of Nebraska,"  
by Dr. Paul Johnsgard, Union College, 7:00 p.m.
- 14-15 Birdathon Weekend (page 2)
- 14 Field Trip to Wilderness Park, 8:00 a.m. (page 2)
- 15 Field Trip to Platte River State Park, 8:00 a.m. (page 2)
- 16 Newsletter deadline, Wachiska office, 5:00 p.m.
- 16 Conservation Committee, Wachiska office, 5:30 p.m.
- 26 Give to Lincoln Day (page 2)



## Field Trips

by John Carlini, Field Trip Chair

### Big Birdathon Weekend

How many ways can a birder simultaneously celebrate birds during Birdathon? Wachiska's annual Birdathon fundraiser will be held on May 14-15, one of the best birding weekends of the year. This year it coincides with the Global Big Day and the 20th anniversary of the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Birdathon provides a fun challenge for birders to observe as many species as they possibly can as some donors to this fundraiser base their pledge amount on the number of species accumulated over the weekend. Field trips on both Saturday and Sunday will bring many eyes and ears together to scour the treetops for winged wonders at favorite birding hotspots.

If you are out birding on your own, you can add your May 14 and 15 lists to the final tally by emailing them to the Wachiska office at [office@wachiskaaudubon.org](mailto:office@wachiskaaudubon.org). You can also submit your May 14 list to the Global Big Day count on [eBird](#) and join birders across the globe to see how many birds can be observed on that day. Our field trip hikes will be on maintained trails. Recommended items to bring include a water bottle, insect repellent, and binoculars if you have them. The public is welcome. If you have questions, call John at 402-475-7275.

#### Wilderness Park - Saturday, May 14, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the South 14th Street parking lot of Wilderness Park located on the south end of Lincoln, 3/4 mile south of Yankee Hill Road next to the trestle footbridge that crosses Salt Creek on the west side of the road. No entry fee is required. Dan Leger will lead our adventure at this popular park and share his expertise on our quest for forest gems. Dan has been a valuable volunteer for Wachiska and is currently president of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union. Iridescent indigo buntings, acrobatic blue-gray gnatcatchers, and chatty red-eyed vireos rely on this prized habitat to make their homes and raise their families. This wonderful park has been protected throughout the decades, thanks to the efforts of many dedicated volunteers and local champions of the Friends of Wilderness Park who will be co-hosting our bird walk.

#### Platte River State Park - Sunday, May 15, 8:00 a.m.

From I-80, turn south at exit 426 and follow Road S13E past South Bend to the park entrance. We'll meet in the parking lot next to the observation tower and restaurant. A state park entry permit is required; daily passes are available for \$5 per vehicle. An easy 30-minute drive from Lincoln will transport birders to a park with hills and hollows that are unusual in our area. John Carlini and Shari Schwartz will lead a search for the breeding birds found here that are as unusual as the habitat. This park attracts dazzling tanagers, skulking Kentucky warblers, tufted titmice, and is known by birders to be the best location in the state for seeing Louisiana waterthrushes.

## Wachiska Audubon's Birdathon 2016

by Tim Knott, Birdathon Chair

It's time for Wachiska's 28<sup>th</sup> annual Birdathon. This fundraising event provides the monetary resources needed to make Wachiska function. As the years go by, this fundraiser becomes more and more essential as a source of sustenance for our chapter's programs and activities. The photos below show the Garden Tour on Father's Day and educational events for young people. The Birdathon makes these possible as well as financing part of our newsletter and office expenses.



Father's Day Garden Tour

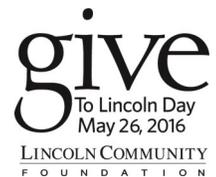


Nature Night for Kids

We are grateful to all our members and friends who contribute to the Birdathon each year. By now you should have received the Birdathon letter. **If you haven't already done so, please mail in your contribution and maybe increase it a little this year.** If you have not contributed before, how about a donation this year? Our goal is to receive a donation from each of our members. You are invited to attend special birdwatching hikes on May 14 and 15 (see column at left).

### Give to Lincoln Day on May 26

by Tim Knott, Event Chair



As part of our Birdathon campaign, Wachiska Audubon is once again participating in Give to Lincoln Day 2016. This is the fifth year for the city-wide, online donation day for nonprofit organizations, sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation. The foundation is again providing \$300,000 in matching funds to encourage members to donate to their own organization online. The larger our donation total, the bigger the share of the matching fund we will receive. All funds we receive will be considered part of our Birdathon.

You can participate in Give to Lincoln Day in one of two ways. On May 26, go to the Give to Lincoln Day website, <https://givetolincoln.razoo.com/us/story/Wachiska-Audubon-Society>, then donate using your credit card by following the instructions. It's just like ordering a book or a sweater online.

The other alternative is to mail or bring your donation check to our office before 3:30 p.m. on May 26. We will deliver it to the Lincoln Community Foundation office before the end of that business day. You can also deliver your own check to the LCF office that day. Checks should be payable to the Lincoln Community Foundation with Wachiska Audubon written on the memo line. Thank you for helping Wachiska by participating in Give to Lincoln Day.



## From the Board ...

by Gary Fehr, Vice President

### Pollinators in the Veggie Patch



Gary Fehr

May heralds the start of gardening season, as backyard gardeners everywhere spill outside and begin frenzied digging in the dirt. Many vegetables require pollination. With concerns over declining pollinator populations worldwide, we can do our part to provide habitat that they need to flourish.

“Companion planting” is a gardening technique of planting varieties of vegetables, flowers, and herbs in close proximity based on how they complement each other. There are several benefits of companion planting, but one we’ll talk about here is to increase the number of pollinators visiting your squash, cucumbers, melons, peppers, and more.

Reserving space for annual flowers among the vegetables creates an abundance of blossoms that will make your veggie patch even more enticing for the winged workers to practice their pollination craft. A few annuals that you might want to experiment with this year are borage, marigolds, and coreopsis.

Borage - An herb in its own right, borage produces pretty blue and pink flowers on top of generous amounts of foliage. Borage is easy to grow, will often self-seed, and the flowers are edible!

French marigolds are traditionally planted alongside tomatoes. It is believed their roots emit a substance deterring damaging nematodes. Their blooms will help draw insects to the garden.

Coreopsis - The cheery flowers at the end of delicate airy foliage are a great way to signal insects that good things are in store if they come this way. As a bonus, the yellow and burgundy Plains coreopsis is native!

Don’t forget your garden borders and other backyard areas. Perennial beds can work year after year to attract pollinators.

Culvers Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) is a Nebraska native producing tall spikes of white flowers. If you haven't grown this, you should put a few in your landscape. You'll be amazed at the number and variety of insects crowding the blossoms.

Wild Bergamot, also known as Bee Balm, is a member of the mint family. The native cultivar is *Monarda fistulosa*. It grows three to four feet tall and produces intricate lavender flowers. It will reliably return year after year and produce summer blossoms to attract bees, butterflies, and even hummingbirds.

(Gary Fehr is vice president of Wachiska. He owns and operates Lincoln Neighbors Urban Farm and is a software engineer for Arbor Day Foundation.)

## New Friends of Wachiska Since Last Month

by Joyce Vannier, Membership Chair

The Friends of Wachiska list has been rapidly growing the last couple of months. To date, 293 individuals and families have joined the ranks. Beginning this month, newsletters will be mailed **only to Friends of Wachiska members**. National Audubon members in our chapter area who do not have a current Friends membership will receive mailed newsletters several times a year and can access all our newsletters online at [WachiskaAudubon.org](http://WachiskaAudubon.org).

This change is part of our effort to make Wachiska Audubon as financially sustainable as possible and is a practice common to many local Audubon chapters across the country. The monthly newsletter has been one of our largest annual expenses, and mailing to only Friends members represents a savings of thousands of dollars.

If you would like to get *The Babbling Brook* newsletter in your mailbox each month, you can become a Wachiska Friend by completing the form on page 7 of this issue. Thank you for your continued support. The latest members to do so are:

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Susan Scott                  | Dayle Williamson           |
| Lisa Ann & Richard Sutton    | Diane Bartels              |
| George Wolf                  | Jack Eager                 |
| Dolores Bartholomew          | Jon & Julie Thomas         |
| Larry Einemann               | Don & Joanne Pepperl       |
| Renee Thakur                 | Ken & Arlys Reitan         |
| Mary Reifschneider           | Elizabeth Cisne            |
| Richard Voeltz               | M J Berry                  |
| Brigid Amos                  | Elizabeth & Daniel Nelson  |
| Dorene Eisentrager           | Roselyn Shaffer            |
| Judith Wilson & Dennis Macek | Mona Peterson              |
| Sharon Wingrove              | Deb & Tom Berger           |
| Mary Kay Vestecka            | Jerry & Mitzi Wiggle       |
| Mary Jasnowski               | Patty Spitzer & Sam Welsch |
| Fred & Virginia Schelert     | Phyllis & Gary Hergenrader |
| Carol Johnstone              | Cal & Cara Bentz           |
| Maureen Flierl               | Mark Van Roojen &          |
| Kathleen Thuman              | Jennifer Haley             |

## Backyard Garden Tour Next Month

by Anne Senkbeil, Event Chair

Father’s Day this year will be June 19, and Wachiska will again present its Backyard Garden Tour on that day. This is the 27<sup>th</sup> annual event and will run from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. At that time, seven beautiful gardens from the north part of Lincoln will be featured. Included will be an experimental garden on the UNL East Campus. This is a wonderful family tradition, so mark your calendars and tell your friends. Pick up the phone and call me at 402-423-6524 if you can help for an hour or two. We would love to have some new helpers.

## **We Need to Save U.S. Farmland**

*by Chuck Francis, Population & Environment Committee*

Driving across the wide-open spaces of our Great Plains, we can hardly imagine that farmland in the U.S. is disappearing at an alarming rate. Endless fields of corn and soybeans plus large piles of surplus grain, low prices, and projections of four percent more corn acres this year challenge this concern. How could we be short of farmland?

In fact, we are currently converting farmland to meet other human needs and wants for homes, stores, parking lots, factories, and highways at more than one million acres/year in the U.S. alone. Today, in this country, we have about 450 million acres of quality land or about 1.5 acres/person. Demographers report the U.S. population is growing at one percent/year. Combining land loss with population gain, it is easily calculated that in 2050 we will have only half as much land per person as today. This should raise concerns. With half as much ag land for each person, we would barely have enough for our own needs and none left for export.

These calculations by Worldwatch Institute in Washington, D.C. include expected advances in technology and reduced production capacity due to erosion and salinization of current lands. Projections of U.S. land needs depend on future export demand, on grains and residues used for fuel production, and on continued production for animal feed. Confounding factors include globalization of the food system, uncertainty of international trade treaties, and increased animal protein demand with rising incomes in many countries. In addition, we recognize in the larger picture the very real limits of fresh water, phosphorus, and finite fossil fuels—and ultimately the need for balance between human population and available resources on a global basis.

What can we do as concerned citizens, aware consumers, and people who care deeply for the environment? We must think about our animal-protein rich diets, based on inefficient conversion of grains by ruminants, resources invested in a perfect green monoculture lawn, and the quest for a larger house and property. Ultimately, we should consider how to distinguish between our *needs* and our *wants* [from Martin Luther King, Jr]. Many personal decisions contribute to unnecessary resource use and some to loss of farmland and wildlife habitat.

One initiative to raise awareness and seek viable alternatives to land conversion is offered each spring at UNL. In “Urbanization of Rural Landscapes” we examine sprawl from all angles—economic incentives, development priorities, environmental impacts, social consequences for people and rural communities. Most importantly, we look at legal mechanisms and other zoning incentives that can make a difference. The class even discusses individual greed and short-term thinking that drives many human decisions in our society.

We live in a new century and conditions are changing. Paving over farmland, building houses and factories, and creating acreages all impact food production potential and often reduce wildlife habitat. With a new appreciation of multiple functions of farmland and preserving natural areas and ecosystem services, we should carefully think about new realities.

Our society is built on individual choice; yet we need to thoughtfully make decisions that affect our shared future, including the future of our children and their children who cannot yet speak for themselves. New developments or acreages today attract people away from a densely populated city where our lives can be more energy- and land-use efficient. It is short-sighted to consider only our individual immediate desires that contribute to taking land out of farming. As the 1988 United Nations report, *Our Common Future*, stated, we must seek “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It is critical for us to think about broader society and the future as we make land use decisions.

## **Earth Day Activities**

*from the Population and Environment Committee*

The site was a wind tunnel under a sunny sky when Earth Day was celebrated Saturday, April 23. About 60 local organizations and businesses were represented at Lincoln’s downtown Union Plaza. The population and environment committee attracted lots of dirt-loving kids who planted seeds of three prairie plants in egg cartons in a take-home experiment to see how long it takes prairie seeds to germinate. The wind prevented our two tri-fold panels and Wachiska sign from being displayed in an upright position. Luckily, Velcro held book covers on the Eco Books for Kids display, along with photos of the prairie plants. There was a special dedication to our friend, Jimmie Cooley, who worked in the children’s department at Bennett Martin Library. Jimmie loved nature and the outdoors and served on our committee for many years. She is greatly missed!

The final activity was a display of two solar cookers powered by the sun. The ovens, placed on the ground, attracted many curious kids and adults asking lots of questions. Thanks to our great group of volunteers.

## **Yampa Valley Birding Festival in September**

The fifth annual Yampa Valley Crane Festival will take place September 8-11 in Steamboat Springs and Hayden in northwest Colorado. The greater sandhill cranes gather in the Yampa Valley to feed and dance before they migrate south for the winter.

Festival features will include workshops, guided viewing, expert speakers, and many fun and educational family events in a beautiful mountain valley setting. Check this website for more information and registration: [www.coloradocranes.org](http://www.coloradocranes.org). Email [coloradocranes@gmail.com](mailto:coloradocranes@gmail.com) or call 970-276-1933.

## Golf Courses as Sanctuaries

by Richard Peterson

Being a sometimes golfer, I share this from the 1929 *Bird-Lore* Vol. XXXI, No.6, page 453.

The possibilities for making bird sanctuaries of golf club properties seem to offer a very fruitful field of service. The subject has been taken up by the Association, and announcement of details will be issued shortly. At this time mention only will be made of the fact that the development of plans is in the hands of the following committee: Eugene S. Wilson, New York; Bruce Barton, New York; Grantland Rice, New York; Frank M. Chapman, New York; Robert T. Jones, Jr., Atlanta, Ga.; and T. Gilbert Pearson, New York.

A year later, this appeared in the 1930 *Bird-Lore* Vol. XXXII, No.6, page 479.

Reference was made a year ago to the fact that the Association was just beginning a project to encourage the establishment of bird sanctuaries on gold courses. This work has been pursued throughout the year. Dr. Arthur A. Allen of Cornell University was engaged to take charge of this effort. In the early winter Dr. Chapman wrote a circular on "Winter Birds as Guests of Golf Clubs." Following this, Dr. Allen prepared a valuable and extremely attractive illustrated brochure of "Golf Clubs as Bird Sanctuaries." This was sent to all golf clubs in New York State, totaling about 330, and to respond favorably, and already 34 have entered actively into the work of making their grounds more attractive to birds. An unusually effective wall poster in colors, entitled, "Build Bird Houses for These Valuable Birds," has been distributed for placing in the caddie houses and on club bulletin boards. Dr. Allen has visited various clubs and has had conferences with many golf club officials. During the summer he prepared motion pictures depicting scenes about golf courses and showing birds that frequent them. A standard-size film and seven copies of 16mm have recently been made available to the public. Demand for their loan was instantaneous. The expense of this work is borne by one of our members who is a bird and golf enthusiast.

Grantland Rice (b 1880- d 1945) was a well-known "golf enthusiast," but he was probably best known as a sportswriter with the *New York Tribune*. For those of you who are not golfers, committee member Robert T. Jones, Jr. deserves mention. Bobby Jones (b 1902 – d 1971) at age 22 won his first major golf tournament, the 1924 U.S. Open. He would win the "Grand Slam" in 1930 when, while still an amateur, he won the U.S. Amateur and the U.S. Open as well as the British Amateur and the British Open. In 1931, he bought a property near Atlanta that would become Augusta National Golf Club which hosts the Masters today.

## Looking for Cookie Bakers and Helpers

If you can provide home-baked cookies, bars, or quick breads now and then, please contact Arlys in the office, 402-486-4846. We also need helpers to assist Cheryl in serving them at general meetings.

## Water a Key for Backyard Wildlife

by Duane Hovorka, Nebraska Wildlife Federation

Water is a key component of any backyard wildlife area. Like people, birds, mammals and other wildlife need clean, fresh water to survive.

Your options for providing water are limited only by your space and your imagination, but here are some ideas.

**Bird Bath:** Birds need water to keep their feathers clean, and a bird bath will provide some protection from cats and other predators. Keep the water fresh (and reduce mosquito problems) by dumping and re-filling it every day. Clean feathers provide better insulation, so a heated bird bath will help birds survive the winter.

**Stream:** The gurgling sound of running water should put a smile on your face and will please wildlife as well. If you are lucky enough to have a natural stream on your property, treat it carefully.

Maintain buffers of native vegetation on the stream banks to reduce erosion. Leave some branches that fall into your stream to provide habitat for larvae of dragonflies and damselflies. Rocks and gravel can provide a mix of pools, runs and riffles to provide diverse habitat.

**Pond:** A pond is a nice addition to almost any backyard, providing habitat for fish and frogs, but ponds require management. A plastic liner is usually required, and a pump will provide oxygen in the water and keep the pond from going stagnant.

Floating plants like duckweed, and submerged pots of water lilies, pondweed and arrowhead can provide oxygen for the water and shade for fish. If you stock non-native fish like koi in your pond, be sure the pond won't overflow into a stream or lake in a heavy rain.

**Wetland:** Homeowners and businesses are increasingly using water gardens with native wetland plants to capture and filter rainfall from roofs and driveways. Toads will benefit from these areas.

**Mud Flat:** Many butterflies obtain water from mud rather than open water. Clear vegetation from a space near your pond or bird bath and splash water on it to create a natural mud flat, or fill a shallow dish with sandy soil to create a container mud flat.

*(The above article is reprinted with permission from the Nebraska Wildlife Federation's Prairie Blade newsletter, Spring 2016.)*

## Save the Date

Wachiska's 27th annual Backyard Garden Tour will again take place on Father's Day. See notice bottom of page 3. Helpers are needed. Call Anne Senkbeil or Arlys NOW to help—Please!!

# Climate Change Update

by Marilyn McNabb

*Science* in April published a survey of the effects of climate change on birds using about 50 years' worth of citizen scientists' data for 145 species native to Europe and 380 native to the U.S. Check out this link: <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/352/6281/84>. Ecologist Phillip Stephens of Durham University led a team of scientists who concluded that "The only factor that could explain the increasing abundance of some species and the decreasing populations of others was the variation in climate conditions within their ranges," the National Audubon website reported. "Recent climate change has already favored one set of species over another," Stephens said. Audubon's Director of Conservation Science Chad Wilsey noted that the study may make it easier for elected officials to grasp the fact that climate change is already having "detectable, pronounced" impacts on wildlife.

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Birds like grasshopper sparrows, hummingbirds, and western meadowlarks and pollinators such as bees and monarch butterflies could be among the beneficiaries of an emerging consensus on the best landscaping for solar projects. About 4,500 acres of former farmland in Minnesota will be turned into solar projects to meet the Legislature's requirement to generate 10 percent of the state's energy from solar by 2030. Instead of the usual gravel, concrete, or turf grass between solar panels, a bill proceeding without opposition encourages the planting of native vegetation—prairie plants.

The lifetime of the solar project will give microorganisms and soil fauna the chance to recover from years of compaction, pesticide, and fertilizer use. Project operating costs can be reduced with a single annual mowing. According to the results of a five-year storm water study by the U.S. Geological Survey near Madison, Wisconsin, prairie vegetation had considerably better infiltration rates. Roots of prairie vegetation were found to a depth of 4.7 feet compared with 0.46 feet in the turf.

Sources: <https://www.audubon.org/news/can-solar-plants-make-good-bird-habitat><http://cleantechnica.com/2016/03/15/utility-and-community-solar-should-use-native-landscaping/>.

If this sounds like a good idea to you, share it with the citizen board members of our publicly-owned electric company at [board@les.com](mailto:board@les.com). Here are the Lincoln Electric System board members: <http://www.les.com/about-les/management-board/administrative-board-members>. (After nine years, I'm off the LES board.)

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How can carbon be pulled out of the atmosphere in order to restore a stable climate? One answer is in the title of an impressive new book, *The Carbon Farming Solution: A Global Toolkit of Perennial Crops and Regenerative Agriculture Practices for Climate Change Mitigation and Food Security* by Eric Toensmeier (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2016).

Toensmeier's subjects, as one reviewer lists them, include climate change, food and nutritional security, eutrophication and contamination of water, and dwindling of soil biodiversity, and how to meet United Nations' sustainable development goals [Dr. Rattan Lal's review]. Quoting an UNCTAD study, Toensmeier says greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, land clearing for agriculture, the food system, and food waste amounts to roughly half of all greenhouse gas emissions attributable to humans. But his main interest is the potential for carbon sequestration in soil, agroforestry and perennial crops, livestock systems, and a remarkable range of crops, both domesticated and wild. The 500-page book is full of beautiful photos, detailed charts, a recommended reading list for each section, and a good index. It could be of use to a large or small farmer, a gardener, or in a college classroom. Toensmeier's website is <http://www.perennialsolutions.org/>. Carbon farming, Toensmeier writes, can't by itself avoid catastrophic climate change, but "it does belong at the center for our transformation as a civilization. Along with new economic priorities, a massive switch to clean energy, and big changes to much of the rest of the way our societies work, carbon farming offers a pathway out of destruction and a route to hope."

## Sandhills Grazing and Birding Tour June 14

by Marian Langan, Audubon Nebraska

Join us for the Sandhills Grazing and Birding Tour in the Nebraska Sandhills on Tuesday, June 14. The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition has partnered with Audubon Nebraska and the Sandhills Task Force to bring ranchers and bird enthusiasts together to learn about successful grazing practices, native and migratory birds, Sandhill ranch heritage, and wildlife habitat.

The tour includes an optional 6:30 a.m. birding tour at the Eatinger Ranch, established in 1878 north of Thedford. It has an abundance of wetlands and sub-irrigated native meadows surrounded by upland Sandhills rangeland. Also included are stops at the Reed Hamilton Ranch, established in 1898 north of Thedford, containing a variety of habitats; and the Dailey Angus Ranch east of Thedford, all native, upland Sandhills rangeland.

Presenters include the Eatinger, Hamilton, and Dailey families; Brian Shaw, farmer/rancher and 2015 Leopold Conservation Awardee; Shelly Kelly, Sandhills Task Force; Andy Bishop, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture; T.J. Walker, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Marian Langan, Audubon Nebraska; and Andrew Pierson, Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary.

Pre-registration is due by June 6. Sign up at [www.SandhillsTaskForce.org](http://www.SandhillsTaskForce.org), by emailing [Shelly@SandhillsTaskForce.org](mailto:Shelly@SandhillsTaskForce.org), or by calling 308-214-0065.

Registration will also be taken at the door. Pre-registration cost is \$15 for the full event and \$10 if you can't attend the banquet. Pay at the door, on-line, or by mail.

## Public Officials

### **President Barack Obama**

1600 Pennsylvania Av NW, Washington DC 20500-0001  
Comment line: 202-456-1111  
Phone: 202-456-1414 Fax: 202-456-2461  
E-mail at website: <http://whitehouse.gov/contact>

### **Senator Ben Sasse**

100 Centennial Mall N Rm 287, Lincoln NE 68508  
Lincoln phone: 402-476-1400 Fax: 402-476-0605  
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-4224 Fax: 202-224-5213  
E-mail at website: <http://sasse.senate.gov>

### **Senator Deb Fischer**

440 N 8<sup>th</sup> St Ste 120, Lincoln NE 68508  
Lincoln phone: 402-441-4600 Fax: 402-476-8753  
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-6551 Fax: 202-228-0012  
E-mail at website: <http://fischer.senate.gov>

### **Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (1<sup>st</sup> District)**

301 S 13<sup>th</sup> St Ste 100, Lincoln NE 68508-2537  
Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598  
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4806 Fax: 202-225-5686  
E-mail at website: <http://fortenberry.house.gov>

### **Congressman Brad Ashford (2<sup>nd</sup> District)**

7126 Pacific St, Omaha NE 68106  
Omaha phone: 402-916-5678  
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4155 Fax: 202-226-5452  
E-mail at website: <http://ashford.house.gov>

### **Congressman Adrian Smith (3<sup>rd</sup> District)**

416 Valley View Dr Ste 600, Scottsbluff NE 69361  
Scottsbluff phone: 308-632-3333 Fax: 308-635-3049  
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-6435 Fax: 202-225-0207  
E-mail at website: <http://adriansmith.house.gov>

### **Capitol Hill Switchboard**

888-436-8427 or 202-224-3121

### **Governor Pete Ricketts**

Capitol Bldg, PO Box 94848, Lincoln NE 68509-4848  
Phone: 402-471-2244 Fax: 402-471-6031  
E-mail at website: <http://governor.nebraska.gov>

### **State Senator \_\_\_\_\_**

District \_\_\_ State Capitol, PO Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

### **State Capitol Switchboard**

402-471-2311

### **Lancaster County Commissioners**

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10<sup>th</sup> St Rm 110, Lincoln NE 68508  
Phone: 402-441-7447 Fax: 402-441-6301  
E-mail: [commish@lancaster.ne.gov](mailto:commish@lancaster.ne.gov)

### **Mayor Chris Beutler**

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10<sup>th</sup> St Rm 208, Lincoln NE 68508-2828  
Phone: 402-441-7511 Fax: 402-441-7120  
E-mail: [mayor@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:mayor@lincoln.ne.gov)

### **Lincoln City Council**

402-441-7515  
E-mail: [council@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:council@lincoln.ne.gov)

### **Lincoln Journal Star**

Letters to the editor, 926 P St, Lincoln NE 68508  
E-mail: [oped@journalstar.com](mailto:oped@journalstar.com)

## **Join now! Become a Friend of Wachiska Audubon Society!**

This local chapter membership provides you with voting privileges and access to all our events, programs, and committees, **plus 100 percent of your membership donation goes directly to the Wachiska chapter. In addition, Friend members receive our monthly newsletter, *The Babbling Brook*, in their choice of print or electronic form.**

### **Friends of Wachiska (local membership)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ \$25 Individual/Friend
- \_\_\_ \$35 Family Friend
- \_\_\_ \$50 Black-capped Chickadee Friend
- \_\_\_ \$100 Northern Cardinal Friend
- \_\_\_ \$250 Western Meadowlark Friend
- \_\_\_ \$500 Bald Eagle Friend
- \_\_\_ \$1000 Peregrine Falcon Friend

Select the level of support that is right for you and make your check payable to **Wachiska Audubon Society**. All funds remain with our local chapter and are tax deductible. Mail to:

Wachiska Audubon Society  
Attention: Membership Committee  
4547 Calvert St Ste 10  
Lincoln NE 68506-5643

\_\_\_ I prefer to receive my newsletter by email.

Please note: If you are already a member of National Audubon Society (NAS) you automatically become a member of Wachiska, but not a Wachiska Friend member. Only Wachiska Friends receive the printed monthly newsletter each month. If you wish to join NAS or receive *Audubon* magazine, please contact National Audubon Society directly.



**American Goldfinch family**

## Community Crops Plant Sale

On Saturday, May 14, Community Crops will be having a plant sale from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon at Wyuka Stables, 3600 O Street. You'll find a fantastic selection of vegetable plants, tasty herbs, and beautiful perennials. Choose from dozens of types of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumber, melon, squash, herbs, and many other high-quality naturally grown plants. Your garden will be amazing and you'll be supporting community gardens in Lincoln! For more information about food grown where you live, contact [communitycrops.org](http://communitycrops.org) or 402-474-9802.

## Birdseed Still Waiting for YOUR Birds

There are four 8-lb. bags of Nyjer Thistle and 32 suet cakes available in the Wachiska office. The thistle sells for \$12/bag; suet cakes are \$2.50/each.



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## Wachiska Audubon Society

4547 Calvert St Ste 10  
Lincoln NE 68506-5643

402-486-4846

Office@WachiskaAudubon.org

www.WachiskaAudubon.org

## WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2016

### OFFICERS

President.....	*Jessi Umberger (Otoe) .....	402-580-3057
Vice President.....	*Gary Fehr .....	402-570-4382
Recording Secretary .....	*Rachel Simpson .....	402-742-7991
Treasurer .....	*vacant .....	
Immediate Past President .....	*Elizabeth Nelson .....	402-770-3485

### STANDING COMMITTEES/POSITIONS

Director at Large.....	*Richard Peterson .....	402-489-2996
Director at Large.....	*Roxanne Smith .....	402-477-1319
Director at Large.....	*vacant .....	
Conservation.....	*Stu Lutlich (Geneva).....	402-759-3597
Education.....	Sue Kohles (Palmyra) .....	402-780-5558
	*Tim Knott .....	402-483-5656
Field Trips .....	John Carlini .....	402-475-7275
	*Ken Reitan .....	402-423-3540
Hospitality.....	Cheryl Moncure.....	402-488-0036
Legislation.....	Bruce Kennedy (Malcolm) .....	402-796-2114
	*Sam Truax .....	402-325-9012
Membership .....	Joyce Vannier .....	402-570-8469
	*Lana Novak.....	402-475-8693
Monthly Programs/General Meetings.....	Arlys Reitan .....	WAS office 402-486-4846
Newsletter Editor .....	Arlys Reitan .....	WAS office 402-486-4846
Population/Environment .....	*Colleen Babcock .....	308-850-0445
Publicity/Public Relations.....	Jeanne Kern .....	402-423-0428

\*Denotes Board member

### OTHER ASSOCIATES

Bird Questions .....	Kevin Poague .....	402-797-2301
Facebook Coordinator .....	Benjamin Vogt .....	402-499-5851
NAS Regional Board Member .....	Michele Crist (Boise, ID).....	208-863-1918
Newsletter Layout .....	Linda Sullivan .....	402-580-8515
Raptor Recovery .....	Betsy Finch (Elmwood) .....	402-994-2009
Executive Director Audubon Nebraska.....	Marian Langan.....	402-797-2301
Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Director .....	Glynnis Collins .....	402-797-2301
Webmaster .....	Dan Staehr .....	402-440-5869

## NEBirds Website

Check out the email discussion at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEBirds> to learn of the latest sightings and interesting tales of Nebraska's most avid birders and those interested in Nebraska birds and their ecology. Posts change daily—and even more often when excitement arises. Offerings of recent sightings, questions, and new photos are all welcome.

**Wachiska Audubon Society's financial records are available for examination in the office.**

## A Gift to the Future

A bequest to Wachiska Audubon Society is a gift to future generations enabling our natural heritage to continue. For wills, trusts, and gifts, our legal name is **Wachiska Audubon Society**. Our Federal Tax ID number is **51-0229888**.

