



Wachiska  
Audubon Society

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

# The Babbling Brook

Our 51<sup>st</sup> Year of Protecting Nature 1973 - 2024

APRIL 2024

Volume 33 - Issue 4

Wachiska Program and General Meeting — Thursday, April 11, 7:00 p.m., Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, and also via YouTube link: <https://youtube.com/live/3GcahJ4njV0?feature=share>

## "Birding While Indian . . . in Nebraska"

by Thomas C. Gannon

**T**homas Gannon's *Birding While Indian* spans more than 50 years of childhood walks and adult road trips to deliver, via a compendium of birds recorded and revered, the author's life as a part-Lakota inhabitant of the Great Plains. Great horned owl, sandhill crane, dickcissel—such species form a kind of rosary, a corrective to the rosaries that evoke Gannon's traumatic time in an Indian boarding school in South Dakota, his mother's tears when coworkers called her "squaw," and the violent erasure colonialism demanded of the Indigenous humans, animals, and land of the United States.



Tom Gannon

Birding has always been Gannon's escape and solace. He later found similar solace in literature, particularly by Native authors. He draws on both throughout this expansive, hilarious, and

humane memoir. An acerbic observer—of birds, of the aftershocks of history, and of human nature—Gannon navigates his obsession with the ostensibly objective avocation of birding and his own mixed-blood subjectivity, searching for that elusive snowy owl and his own identity. The result is a rich reflection not only on one man's life but on the transformative power of building a deeper relationship with the natural world.

**Tom Gannon** is an associate professor of English and of Indigenous Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His publications include *Skylark Meets Meadowlark: Reimagining the Bird in British Romantic and Contemporary Native American Literature* (UNP, 2009) and various articles on the intersection of birds and human discourse (which he has dubbed ornithocriticism). His latest book, *Birding While Indian: A Mixed-Blood Memoir* (OSUP, 2023), is part birding memoir, part cultural critique of the ongoing Christo-Custer colonialism of the Great Plains. Tom is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.



Join Wachiska on **Thursday, April 11, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, in Lincoln. This free, public, in-person talk will also be live-streamed on YouTube at

<https://youtube.com/live/3GcahJ4njV0?feature=share>

Copy this link into your browser before the program begins. No registration is needed. Invite family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join us in-person or online. This program can also be viewed at a later time. Check Wachiska's website for links to past programs.

"Sing out, my soul, thy songs of joy such as a happy bird will sing beneath a rainbow's lovely arch in early spring."

-- William Henry Davies

### Calendar

#### April

- 8 Conservation Committee via Zoom, 6:30 p.m.
- 11 General Meeting, "Birding While Indian . . . in Nebraska," by Tom Gannon, 7:00 p.m. in-person at Unitarian Church and also live-streamed; no registration needed (see above)
- 13 Return of the Thunderbirds, Indian Center, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (page 4)
- 15 Newsletter deadline, Wachiska office, 5:00 p.m.
- 16 Board Meeting via Zoom, 7:00 p.m.
- 20 Earth Day, Innovation Campus, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- 27 Field trip to Pioneers Park, 8:00 a.m. (page 2)

# Executive Director's Message

by Mark Brohman

Our March program about Loren Eiseley by Dr. Tom Lynch was well received. If you missed it, be sure to go to our website and watch the program on YouTube. Not only did we have a good crowd in person, but we had a sizable online audience watching live that night. Dr. Lynch inspired me to do additional research on Eiseley, who grew up in Lincoln and graduated from UNL. I never met Eiseley, but I have spoken to people who did meet him, and they were impressed. I think our mutual love of paleontology is what attracted me to Eiseley. His writings can be difficult and complex to read, but his love of Nebraska's ancient world was unwavering.



April will be a busy month with Wachiska hosting a booth at Return of the Thunderbirds at the Indian Center on April 13, Lincoln Earth Day at Innovation Campus on April 20, and Nature Nights around Lincoln on April 4, 11, 18 and 30.

We just completed another successful Spring Birdseed Sale. I want to thank all who bought seed and volunteers who helped organize and carry out the sale. We will have another Fall Birdseed Sale, so don't forget our feathered friends this fall.

The Legislature will be down to less than a week left in this short session by the time you receive this newsletter. One of our biggest concerns this session was one of the main appropriations bills, LB1413, which contained provisions to sweep several agency cash funds, including recycling funds at the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, and Game Cash and Habitat Cash Funds at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Fortunately, the Appropriations Committee removed those provisions before the bill advanced to the floor. The loss of Game and Habitat Cash Funds would have resulted in Nebraska losing millions of dollars of federal matching funds.

A bill that appears to be headed for approval is LB1335. This bill exempts the Department of Transportation and others from State threatened and endangered species reviews in the right-of-way of roads and highways. We are mounting a campaign against LB1335. LB1375 makes it easier to get conditional use permits from counties for confined animal feedlots, but this bill is still sitting in committee and hopefully will die at the end of this session. Unfortunately, LB828, the Apiary and Pollinator bill, and LB831 establishing a "restricted plant" list are both lingering in committee and doesn't look like they will go anywhere this year. Two fire-related bills that we support (LB576 and LB655) are also stalled in committee and will probably go nowhere this session. We will continue to monitor the progress of several other bills.

A big thank you to Open Harvest for making Wachiska their SEED recipient for the month of March. This program selects a local nonprofit each month to benefit from customers who "round-up" their grocery bill. We will report in the future the total from this gift. Be sure and visit them at their new home located at 330 South 21<sup>st</sup> Street in the Telegraph District. Friends of Wilderness Park is the April recipient.

Spring is here, so get out and enjoy a walk, maybe visit one of our prairies or a local park and see if you can spot some new birds or catch some migrants on their way north. Tim Houghton will be hosting a bird walk at Pioneers Park on April 27. Meet at the visitor center's parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Details below.

## 2024 Birdathon

by Tim Knott

April is the beginning of the Birdathon fundraising drive. This year marks the 36<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of Wachiska's Birdathon. Wachiska Audubon has depended on the annual Birdathon as the most important fundraising event of the year. Now, combined with the Give to Lincoln Day event on May 30, it makes all the things we do as an organization possible. The donations during this time make our education and outreach events such as "Tour the Wild Side," Prairie Discovery Days, Nature Nights, Bird ENCOUNTER for kids, and many other educational activities happen. It enables us to continue regular monthly meetings with programs as well as our work with the state legislature. Perhaps just as important is that this support provides for the long-term sustainability of our chapter.

You should receive your Birdathon fundraising letter in early April. Please contribute as much as you can with a mail-in donation using the envelope provided. If you prefer giving online, donate via our website or participate in Give to Lincoln Day on May 30. Thank you to all our members and Friends for your continued support.

## Pioneers Park Birding Trip

Tim Houghton will lead a birding trip at Pioneers Park on Saturday, April 27. Gather at 8:00 a.m. in the visitor center's parking lot. We will be looking for early songbird migrants and other species present. Tim is planning to spend about two hours or more on this excursion. Bring binoculars and dress appropriately. If you have questions or the weather looks uncertain, contact Tim at [timhoughton@comcast.net](mailto:timhoughton@comcast.net).

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*Last month it was reported that Don Pepperl passed away on February 5. Don was a past president of Wachiska as well as our attorney and owner of the office building. A list of donors with memorials to Don was included. Since then, additional memorials have been received from Mary Winquest, Theresa Pella, Joe & Jane Francis, Nebraska Wildlife Federation, and Capitol Studies. Thanks to everyone for remembering Don.*

# 10 Fun Facts About the Northern Mockingbird

by Natalie Wallington, Reporter  
Audubon Magazine

The northern mockingbird is one of North America's most beloved mimics. The skilled singer has also become inextricable from American popular culture, providing inspiration for the fictional "Mockingjay" of the Hunger Games franchise to being a central theme in the iconic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. John James Audubon was a fan of the mocker as well. Here are some facts you might not have known about this American classic.

1. There are a total of 16 avian species in the world with the name "mockingbird," but the northern mockingbird is the only one native to the United States. Other nearby species include the elusive blue mockingbird of Mexico and the island-dwelling Bahama mockingbird, both of which can occasionally appear in the U.S.

2. The northern mockingbird is a year-round resident across much of the U.S., but an expansion into the northeast has been successful due in part to the multiflora rose, or rambler rose. Native to Asia, this invasive rosebush was introduced to the United States in the late 1700s as a root stock for ornamental roses. It makes an ideal nest site for mockingbirds because of its tasty berries and thick tangle of branches.

3. The mockingbird's Latin name is *Mimus polyglottos*, which literally translates to "many-tongued mimic." A polyglot is a person who speaks many languages, referencing the bird's ability to imitate sounds from its environment. While mockingbirds are known to sing several hundred different songs, research suggests they might not learn to copy new sounds in adulthood, as previously thought.

4. A study released in October 2019 found that, in addition to mimicking the calls of other birds and manmade noises like music and machinery, northern mockingbirds have been known to imitate at least 12 species of North American frogs and toads. In fact, John James Audubon was in awe of this bird's singing ability as he wrote in *Birds of America*: "There is probably no bird in the world that possesses all the musical qualifications of this king of song, who has derived all from Nature's self."

5. Because of the northern mockingbird's impressive vocal talents, the illegal pet trade depleted their populations by poaching wild birds across the East Coast in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The best singers were worth up to \$50 in 1828—that's more than \$1,300 in today's dollars.

6. Northern mockingbirds have easily adapted to human development, taking up residence across suburban towns and cities. Wide-open lawns and parks are perfect for hunting their insect prey, and males often sing from perches like the tops of houses and telephone poles, where their performance can involve leaping into the air and fluttering back down.

7. Mockers are prolific breeders. They have been known to make as many as seven nesting attempts during a breeding season, and one female even set an astonishing record of laying 27 eggs in a single season.



Northern Mockingbird

8. The white patches on a mockingbird's wings and outer tail feathers serve dual purposes: The birds often show off these plumes during mating rituals and also flash them when defending their territory from potential predators like hawks and snakes.

9. Mockingbirds can be extraordinarily territorial. They've been known to swoop and dive at pretty much anything, including people, that get close to their nests, which are usually placed between three and 10 feet off the ground. They will also regularly chase other birds away from their preferred food sources, like fruit-bearing trees, in the winter.

10. The northern mockingbird is the state bird of Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas. In true Texas fashion, the 1927 legislation declaring the northern mockingbird the state's official bird reasoned that the species is "a fighter for the protection of his home, falling, if need be, in its defense, like any true Texan."

## NOU's 125th Anniversary Celebration to Meet in Lincoln

The Nebraska Ornithologists' Union (NOU) will be observing the group's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary during their spring meeting May 3-5 at the Holiday Inn Lincoln Southwest, 2500 Tamarin Ridge Road. You do not need to be an NOU member to attend.

Highlights of the conference include field trips, Birding Bowl, basic bird ID, eBird basics, photography workshop, dinner, awards, etc. Specifics and schedules are still being arranged. For details and registration, go to [noubirds.org/Meetings/Next.aspx](http://noubirds.org/Meetings/Next.aspx) or check Ebird's site. Specific questions can be addressed at [nebraska.ornithologists.union@gmail.com](mailto:nebraska.ornithologists.union@gmail.com) according to NOU President Joel Jorgensen.

## Whooping Cranes

There are approximately 400 whooping cranes left in the world, and about 187 of them are in the last wild, migrating flock that flies through the central Platte region of Nebraska. Whooping cranes have been a federally-protected endangered species since 1974. At one time their numbers were as low as 15 birds! Through a 1978 court settlement, the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust was established to protect and maintain the Platte River for whooping cranes and other migratory birds. Today this organization is generally referred to as simply the Crane Trust.

## House Centipede

by Richard Peterson



We've all seen these spooky looking critters. At night (and without your glasses!) you see something when you turn on the light. A fuzzy image on your bathroom floor—or you encounter one scurrying away in a dark or dimly lit corner of your basement.

House centipedes (*Scutigera coleoptrata*) have yellowish-gray bodies with three dark dorsal stripes running down the back. They grow to 1.5 inches long and can have up to 15 pairs of long—very long—legs. Add to this the antennae, and they can seem four inches long. The delicate legs enable them to reach speeds of 1.5 feet/second, running across floors, up walls, and along ceilings. When at rest, it's hard to tell which end is the head. Unlike most centipedes, these have well-developed faceted eyes. When in danger, it can detach any trapped legs, running away without all of them. Spooky indeed.

These creatures live outdoors as well, under rocks, piles of wood or leaves, in bark dust, mulch, and especially in compost piles. They lay 60 to 150 eggs, usually in the spring, so for every one you see there are 100 more lurking somewhere. The immature forms look very much like the parents, only smaller and with only four pairs of legs. More legs are added after a number of molts before adulthood. They can live 3 - 7 years.

These centipedes are mostly nocturnal predators responding to smells and tactile information. Strictly speaking, they sting rather than bite. They should be considered an ally in home pest control because they kill and eat other arthropods such as ants, flies, bedbugs, termites, silverfish, small moths, spiders, crickets, cockroaches, etc. They are likely to be seen in the spring when they emerge in warmer weather or in the autumn when cooling temperatures force them to seek warmer shelter. They enter your home through cracks, who knows where, and can be found in any part of the house—tending to prefer humid areas such as your garage, basement, bathroom, and lavatory.

Well, if that's what house centipedes eat, does that mean I have these unwelcome pests in my home? Maybe, but don't reach for the spray can of insecticide just yet. Remember, moths and ants wreak havoc with your clothing (wool or otherwise) and gnaw on wood furniture. Moth and beetle larvae can get into the containers of beans, pasta, flour, and oatmeal in your pantry. Crickets nibble unseen on the bindings and pages of your books. And cockroaches, we know what a nuisance they can be.

But, if you'd feel better if they weren't sharing your home with you, very quickly pop an upside down glass over them and slide a stiff card over the opening. Then relocate them. If they are aggressively handled, their sting can penetrate human skin. The pain will usually heal quickly without complications.

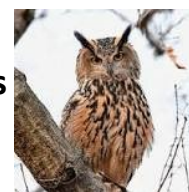
## Return of the Thunderbirds

The third annual Return of the Thunderbirds community cultural event will be held on Saturday, April 13, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the Indian Center, 1100 Military Road, in Lincoln (just west of the Bob Devaney Center). The event is free but free-will donations will go towards support of programming at the Indian Center. Music, arts, food, dancing, vendors, speakers, live birds from the Raptor Conservation Alliance, and more will be available. Partnering with the Indian Center will be Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. As a sponsor, Wachiska will host a nature education booth.

At this event you will learn from Indigenous partners and conservation organizations about this important time of year as the rains, thunder, and birds return to the Great Plains. This is a celebration of the renewal of the earth and thanks the Thunder beings or Thunderbirds. There will be food and other items for purchase at this event.

## Flaco the Eurasian Eagle-Owl Dies

by Mark Brohman



Bird lovers across the country were sad to learn that Flaco, North America's only Eurasian eagle-owl in the wild died when he hit a building in Manhattan's Upper West Side on February 23, 2024. He had escaped from the Central Park Zoo a year ago when someone vandalized his enclosure by cutting the protective netting and he escaped.

The zoo was notified by the Wild Bird Fund that found Flaco. They retrieved his remains and took them to the Bronx Zoo for a necropsy. Flaco was acquired by the zoo in 2010 as a young owl and he spent 13 years in the exhibit before his escape. He wasn't expected to survive in the wild, but he turned out to be a skilled hunter and flyer, capturing rats on several occasions.

The zoo tried to recapture him with bait and calls, but they gave up after a few weeks. They continued to follow him, and he became a local celebrity with many followers. He mostly stayed in or near Central Park but occasionally visited other parts of the city. He was a large bird, with a wingspan of about six feet. It has been noted that bright city lights can blind birds and cause them to crash into buildings.

Flaco's name comes from the Spanish word for "skinny." Eurasian eagle-owls come from Eurasia. They are one of the largest owls in the world, with males weighing up to seven pounds. They have distinctive ear tufts similar to great-horned owls. Like most owls, they are nocturnal predators feeding on small mammals and an occasional bird.

Flaco had his own hashtag, #freeflaco and other social media accounts. He liked to sit on window ledges and was often seen peeping in apartment and office windows. Several artists painted murals of Flaco, poets wrote poems, musicians wrote songs, and people got tattoos of him. The Big Apple is going to miss their Flaco.

## Agricultural Chemicals and Human Health

by Chuck Francis, Education and Outreach Committee

Paraquat® is one of the most widely used herbicides in the U.S., while it has been banned in the European Union since 2007 and in over 60 countries worldwide. Here we apply over ten million pounds per year in agriculture. Do people outside the U.S. know about consequences unknown to us?

Reports in technical journals, available to everyone, describe the effects on humans and other vertebrates. This product is well-known to be persistent and highly toxic and enters the food chain from the soil where we grow crops and from water we consume. Effects on humans include toxicity to critical organs, including lungs, kidneys, heart, and liver. Once in the body, it is difficult to treat, and farm workers using the chemical without proper protection are among the most vulnerable. In countries where education and rules on pesticides are less rigorous, this is a large problem. The chemical has been used in suicides by farmers in India, where chemicals are readily available in rural areas. Pesticide bans in Kerala and other Indian states have substantially reduced suicides in those areas. Mental health problems for farmers are also reportedly due to increasing episodes of heat and drought, a complicating symptom of global climate change.

First released in the U.S. in the 1950s and widely used by farmers a decade later, the powerful weed killer Paraquat® is a contact product that causes immediate symptoms and plant death. It is called a non-selective herbicide and is favored due to its rapid and visible effects. Since 1978, it's been classified as "restricted-use" which requires an applicator to be licensed to legally apply this product.

Farmers in the U.S. recognize its weed management value and have lobbied along with industry to keep it available. Under the name Gramoxone®, Paraquat is important because of weed resistance to Roundup® and many other herbicides. Limited new chemical modes of action are coming from commercial laboratories, due to long development time and costs of registration for vigorous testing before a product can be introduced on the market. There are currently over 500 reports of weeds that are resistant to herbicides available in this country.

Why are there stricter bans on products in other developed countries? One can speculate that farms are smaller and closer to population centers, and threats to urban dwellers may be perceived as higher in Europe than in the U.S. There may be a higher level of respect for scientific reports, especially in northern Europe, according to a poll by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In general, there are stronger pesticide regulations in Europe than in the U.S., including banning use of neonicotinoids in agriculture.

We have known the effects of Paraquat® and other chemicals for decades, but pressures from manufacturers and ready

markets with farmers for convenient pest control have hampered regulations in the U.S. Organic farming systems without chemical pesticides provide one solution to reduce dangers to farm workers and consumers. Growth of the organic food sector continues and could solve the pesticide problem in food and for those who produce it. According to an article in *The Guardian*, adopting sustainable systems worldwide could "create up to \$10tn of benefits a year, improving human health and easing climate crises (*The Guardian*, 29 Jan. 2024). In economic terms, savings in health care, and repairing the environment, these alternative systems make sense.

## 2024 Solar Eclipse

by Mark Brohman

The solar eclipse is coming on April 8. I was so inspired by the last total eclipse in 2017 that I am traveling to southeast Missouri to be in the path of the total eclipse this time. In 2017, I was on our ranch in central Nebraska on a large plateau where one can see 15 to 20 miles in all directions. It was a perfect spot, and it was in the direct path of the eclipse. This year the total eclipse path will be Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

Nebraska will see about 60 – 85 percent of the eclipse. Any one particular location on the planet sees a total solar eclipse roughly every 350 years. The 2024 solar eclipse will last almost twice as long as the previous event. Unlike that on August 21, 2017, the moon's shadow from this year's eclipse will be larger because the moon will be closer to the Earth. The best place to observe the greatest eclipse in Nebraska will be at Rulo at 84.93 percent. Indian Cave State Park 83.87 percent, Beatrice 81.39 percent, Omaha 80.09 percent, Lincoln 79.95 percent, and Kearney 75.23 percent. Poor Harrison will be a mere 60.14 percent, Chadron 61.54 percent, and Scottsbluff 62.70 percent.

I can't help but wonder what ancient civilizations thought when an eclipse occurred. Did they think the world was coming to an end? Let's hope it is not a cloudy day! Be safe and don't forget to wear your protective glasses.

## Save the Date for "Tour the Wild Side"

Wachiska's fourth annual "Tour the Wild Side" is scheduled for Saturday, June 22, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Plan to join in this tour of several backyards to learn how you can be part of an effort to create patches of habitat that can become a collective living landscape for birds, bugs, and people. Volunteers are needed at each site. Contact Theresa at [pella\\_t@yahoo.com](mailto:pella_t@yahoo.com) or Mark at [mbrohman2004@yahoo.com](mailto:mbrohman2004@yahoo.com), 402-525-1504 (cell), if you can help on the day of the event.

# Climate Change Update

by Marilyn McNabb

If you haven't checked National Audubon's website recently, I'd encourage you to do so. While we will always be watching the birds in our backyards, National Audubon is now more articulate about the need for work across the continent where migrating birds need help, and across social divisions, land ownership, and management where humans need to learn to think bigger. This will require cooperation across national lines and social divisions and different strategies for different forms of land ownership and management. As the website says: "Birds are telling us—in their behavior, in their dwindling numbers, in their silence—that we must take action where birds need us most, from the Arctic to Chile and everywhere in between. We follow the science."

You've noticed the hottest U.S. winter ever? Plants are getting green, and bushes are blooming this year way too early. The Audubon website has two excellent articles about how climate change is affecting the timing of migration for birds. The first is from *Audubon* magazine two years ago: <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2022/a-matter-timing-can-birds-keep-earlier-and>. The second is by Maggie Burakoff about a study that just went up on the web in March: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/abs/10.1073/pnas.2308433121>.

Spring offers leaves, flowers, and insects to feed migratory birds but, as time passes, the food is not so abundant. Now that spring "green up" is arriving earlier and earlier, can birds manage the shift in timing? According to the new study in the PNAS, "a wide range of species are already falling behind." The study considers not just songbirds, but also ducks, geese, kites, and woodpeckers. Maybe some species can advance breeding so the chicks' timing matches insect abundance. Maybe not. There's a lot we don't know.

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National Audubon's website also states that "We pair advocacy and diplomacy. Our chapters and centers are hubs that connect individuals and communities to Audubon and to action. . . . Birds delight and connect people across cultural, generational, and geographic boundaries."

Working across cultural boundaries is illustrated in two recent reports from Audubon chapters, both working with Indigenous tribes to restore small parts of tribal homelands and areas birds can use. One is for a shoreline area in California with the Kumeyaay and Payomkawichum tribes and the other for a Colorado River delta area with the Cocopah in Arizona.

The California shoreline restoring Mission Bay and land adjacent to Buena Vista Lagoon is seen by Audubon participants as a part of a hemispheric-wide effort to protect

marshes and rebuild resilient coastlines. As the executive director of Buena Vista Audubon said, "These wetlands supported bird and human communities thousands of years before they were transformed by development. They were part of a large corridor of migratory stopover habitat all along the Pacific coast—and they can be again." The knowledge of the Payomkawichum people is being documented to be shared by other tribal members now and into the future.

Audubon has also worked on an ambitious project with the Cocopah tribe to restore more than 400 acres of the Colorado River floodplain with native grasses, shrubs, trees, and culturally significant plants. More here: <https://www.audubon.org/news/cocopah-indian-tribe-secures-5-5-million-habitat-restoration-colorado-river-delta>.

## Climate Signs Still Available from Wachiska Audubon

Join friends and neighbors to show your concern about our climate and our elected officials. Stop by the Wachiska office and pick up your Climate yard sign.



Yard signs that say "VOTE with CLIMATE in Mind" are available for \$10 each. They are made of material that will hold up well to the elements and come with a metal holder to push into the ground. You are encouraged to put your signs out now for the spring elections. Since they are so durable, they could easily last three or four years even if kept out all year.

## Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Upcoming Events

Third Tuesday bird outings return on April 16, the center hosts Return of the Thunderbirds for the third year at the Indian Center, and all of Lincoln celebrates Earth Day on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Join in the fun! More details at <https://springcreek.audubon.org/>.

Tuesday, April 9	Discovery Leader Training, 12:00 noon – 3:30 p.m. Lunch provided
Saturday, April 13	Return of the Thunderbirds, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Lincoln's Indian Center
Tuesday, April 16	Free 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday Bird Outing, 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Saturday, April 20	Earth Day Lincoln, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Innovation Campus
April 26 - 29	City Nature Challenge, all day, all around Lincoln and Lancaster County

## Public Officials

### **President Joe Biden**

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 Deb Fischer**

1248 O St Ste 1111, 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>

### **Senator Pete Ricketts**

1248 O St Ste 1000, 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://ricketts.senate.gov>

### **Congressman Mike Flood**

301 S 13<sup>th</sup> St Ste 100, Lincoln NE 68508 (1<sup>st</sup> District)  
Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598  
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4806 Fax: 202-225-5686  
E-mail at website: <http://flood.house.gov>

### **Congressman Don Bacon (2<sup>nd</sup> District)**

13906 Gold Cir Ste 101, Omaha NE 68144  
Omaha phone: 888-221-7452  
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4155 Fax: 202-226-5452  
E-mail at website: <https://bacon.house.gov>

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

416 Valley View Dr Ste 600, Scottsbluff NE 69361  
Scottsbluff phone: 308-633-6333 Fax: 308-633-6335  
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 Jim Pillen**

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 Leirion Gaylor Baird**

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10<sup>th</sup> St Rm 301, 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: [councilpacket@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:councilpacket@lincoln.ne.gov)

### **Lincoln Journal Star**

Letters to the editor, 21<sup>st</sup> and N 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ \$25 Individual/Friend
- \_\_\_ \$35 Family Friend
- \_\_\_ \$50 Black-capped Chickadee Friend
- \_\_\_ \$100 Northern Cardinal Friend
- \_\_\_ \$250 Western Meadowlark Friend
- \_\_\_ \$500 Bald Eagle Friend
- \_\_\_ \$1,000 Peregrine Falcon Friend

Select the level of support that is right for you and make your check payable to **Wachiska Audubon Society**. All funds will 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



**American Goldfinches**

\_\_\_ **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 newsletter each month. If you wish to join NAS or receive *Audubon* magazine, please contact the National Audubon Society directly.

*The Babbling Brook* (ISSN #1068-2104) is published monthly by Wachiska Audubon Society. The known office of publication is 4547 Calvert St Ste 10, Lincoln NE 68506-5643. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, Nebraska.

Send address changes to *The Babbling Brook*  
Wachiska Audubon Society, 4547 Calvert St Ste 10  
Lincoln NE 68506-5643



*The Babbling Brook* is printed on recycled and recyclable paper.



Wachiska means “stream” or “creek” in the languages of Indigenous people of eastern Nebraska, the Omaha and Ponca.

The environmental stewardship efforts of the Wachiska Audubon Society take place on the past, present, and future homelands of the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, and Omaha Peoples, as well as those of the relocated Ho-Chunk, Sac and Fox, and Ioway. We humbly join our efforts with theirs in honoring and stewarding this land of prairies, rivers, and streams.

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Wachiska will continue to collect 2024 calendars until further notice if they are dropped off at the office.

Cookie donors are needed for general meetings.

**Wachiska Audubon Society**  
**4547 Calvert St Ste 10**  
**Lincoln NE 68506-5643**

402-486-4846  
 office@WachiskaAudubon.org  
 www.WachiskaAudubon.org

If you missed a monthly program or want to view one again, Wachiska Audubon’s monthly programs are available on YouTube via the homepage at [www.WachiskaAudubon.org](http://www.WachiskaAudubon.org).

### WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2024

Executive Director ..... Mark Brohman  
 Office Administrator..... Arlys Reitan

#### OFFICERS

President ..... \*Theresa Pella  
 Vice President ..... \*Andrea Faas  
 Secretary ..... \*April Stevenson  
 Treasurer/Finance..... \*Carol Bodeen

#### STANDING COMMITTEES/POSITIONS

Director at Large ..... \*Dakota Altman  
 Director at Large ..... \*Ann Briggs  
 Director at Large ..... \*Doug Campbell  
 Director at Large ..... \*Ethan Freese  
 Director at Large ..... \*Stu Lutlich  
 Director at Large ..... \*Tom Lynch  
 Director at Large ..... \*Mercy Manzanares  
 Director at Large ..... \*Kris Powers  
 Conservation ..... \*Ross Scott  
 Education/Outreach..... \*Tim Knott  
 Membership..... Linda Brown

\*Denotes voting Board member

For contact information of officers and committee chairs, call or email the Wachiska office.



Wachiska is participating with Give Nebraska. Through a payroll deduction system, your donations will be automatically withdrawn from your paycheck. There are 75 nonprofit agencies that are beneficiaries, and more than 100 worksites participate. You can give a little each paycheck, and your contributions can add up. Your donations through Give Nebraska are tax deductible. Check with your employer to see if they are part of Give Nebraska.

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

### Mission Statement of the Wachiska Audubon Society

**The mission of the Wachiska Audubon Society is to bring people together to preserve and restore tallgrass prairies and other natural ecosystems, promote birding, support native wildlife, provide nature education, and advocate for the sustainability of our natural community.**

### 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**.

