



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 50th Year of Protecting Nature 1973 - 2023

JULY 2023

Volume 32 - Issue 7

Wachiska Program and General Meeting — Thursday, July 13, 7:00 p.m., Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, and also via YouTube link: <https://youtube.com/live/a-s9UllQ93g?feature=share>

Plovers, Terns, and Sandpits

by Elsa Forsberg, Graduate Research Assistant
Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership, UNL

Least terns and piping plovers are two protected birds that nest in Nebraska. Piping plovers (plovers) are classified as threatened on the federal and Nebraska state endangered species lists. Least terns (terns) were listed as endangered in 1985 and removed from the federal Endangered Species Act in 2021 for improved population recovery; however, the species remains endangered in Nebraska. The ideal nesting habitat for terns and plovers consists of bare-to-sparsely-vegetated, mostly flat sand near water. Historically, that means river sandbars. The Platte River's natural dynamic hydrology of rising and falling water levels scours vegetation from old sandbars and deposits sediment to create new sandbars. However, changes to the river mean few sandbars remain suitable for tern and plover nesting. In the search for nesting habitat, terns and plovers in Nebraska have found an alternative: sand and gravel mining pits. The sand and gravel industry extracts aggregate from old riverbed deposits and, in the process, produces piles of byproduct sand around a central lake. The result is sand and water, just what terns and plovers look for.

The incidental habitat created by sandpits produces many of these young birds in the lower Platte River system. Many completed mine sites are converted into lakeshore housing developments which continue to host nesting terns and plovers as long as open sand is available. This supplemental habitat was

not created with the birds in mind, and nests share the sand with mining equipment and residential housing. The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership (TPCP) was created to cooperate with mine companies and homeowners to protect and monitor sandpit nesting activity. With 15 years of data collected and counting, TPCP aims to understand the demographics of terns, plovers, and their nests and chicks at sandpit sites in Nebraska.



Elsa Forsberg with TPCP

Elsa Forsberg is a graduate student pursuing an MS in applied ecology at UNL's School of Natural Resources. As part of her study, she is a research assistant with the TPCP. Originally from Lincoln, Elsa received her bachelor's degree from UNL in fisheries and wildlife biology. Her experience as a field technician for TPCP during her undergraduate career fueled her passion for terns and plovers, which extends into her graduate research on survival and demography. When not in the field or crunching data at the computer, Elsa enjoys running, hiking, reading, and birding.

Join Wachiska on **Thursday, July 13, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Unitarian Church for this free, public, in-person talk which will also be live-streamed at <https://youtube.com/live/a-s9UllQ93g?feature=share>. No registration is needed. The program can also be viewed at a later time. Check Wachiska's website for links to past programs.

At 5:30 p.m. a summer potluck picnic will take place in the church's dining area. Bring your favorite dish to share, a plate, cup, and silverware and be ready to begin promptly at 5:30. Cold drinks will be provided. We will need to serve, eat, and clean up by 7:00 when the program begins. With live-streaming, we need to begin exactly on time.

(continued at bottom of page 2)

Calendar

July

- 5 Education/Outreach Committee via Zoom, 6:00 p.m.
- 10 Conservation Committee via Zoom, 6:30 p.m.
- 13 **Potluck Picnic** at Unitarian Church, 5:30 p.m.
Program on terns & plovers, 7:00 p.m. SHARP
(see article on this page)
- 15 Newsletter deadline, Wachiska office, 5:00 p.m.
- 18 Board Meeting via Zoom, 7:00 p.m.
- 29 **"Tour the Wild Side," 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.** (pages 4-5)
- 30 Field trip to Marsh Wren, 7:30 a.m. (page 2)

Executive Director's Message

by Mark Brohman

I want to thank all of the wonderful Wachiska Friends and supporters who generously donated last month through the annual Birdathon, Give to Lincoln Day, and Give Nebraska. This is our biggest fundraising period of the year, and you came through in a big way. The Give Nebraska program is described in more detail in this newsletter, but sign-up is continuous all year long. Check with your employer to see if they participate in the program. Some of the larger participants include the University of Nebraska, the City of Lincoln, Lincoln Public Schools, Crete Carrier, Kawasaki, and Lancaster County and there are many others as well.



Wachiska is participating in this year's WanderNebraska 2023 program through the Nebraska State Historical Society. The program started in May and will run through May 2024. We registered Knott Prairie as one of the 150 sites across Nebraska. Knott Prairie is about one mile east and one mile north of Yutan and is a 21-acre Platte River floodplain prairie that has wonderful flora and fauna. The prairie is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and we thought it would be a great alternative site. The program has more than five times the number of stops as last year. Most of the sites are museums. You can find out more about the 150 sites at wandernebraska.com.

Join us for our monthly meeting on Thursday, July 13, at 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Church or online for a presentation from Elsa Forsberg who will discuss least terns and piping plovers. We will have a potluck meal at 5:30 p.m. before the talk, so bring that special dish and get ready for good food, fellowship, and learn about terns and plovers. After the main program, we will continue with the wetlands video for those who care to stay. (See details on page 1 and column 2 on this page.)

On July 29 don't forget to attend "Tour the Wild Side" (see article on pages 4-5). It will be a great opportunity to see what you might plant in your backyard that is native, drought tolerant, pollinator friendly, and just plain attractive. This is a great event preparing us for Doug Tallamy's talk later this year for our 50th anniversary event on December 3 at Innovation Campus.

I have been working with a small group of folks attempting to protect Nine-Mile Prairie by acquiring conservation easements or purchasing land surrounding the prairie. If you are interested in helping with this effort, please contact me.

Congratulations to Larkin Powell as he has been selected as the next director of the School of Natural Resources at UNL. His appointment will begin August 1. Powell will succeed John Carroll who is returning to the faculty after a decade in the position. Birdathon donations are still being accepted and continue to

make up an important part of Wachiska's annual budget in addition to memberships. Donations can be mailed or dropped by the office. As always, we appreciate everyone who has donated this year. Have a wonderful summer.

July Field Trip to Marsh Wren

Join Tim Houghton and Wachiska Audubon for a morning field trip to look for waterfowl and shorebirds at Marsh Wren Saline Wetland, the largest and latest of several saline wetland restoration projects operated by the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District. This grassland is located south of 40th Street and Arbor Road north of Lincoln. The 150-acre site is bordered on the west by Little Salt Creek and on the south by Salt Creek. Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, July 30. Call the Wachiska office if you have questions.

Merlin Now Covers the Globe

Since its release in 2014, Merlin Bird ID's capabilities have rocketed like a displaying American woodcock! In the past six years, Merlin has gone from being able to identify a few hundred North American bird species to more than ten thousand—not quite every species on Earth but getting pretty close! Not only can birds be identified visually with Merlin, it can also help with identifying them by their songs. In May 2023 alone, more than three million people from every part of the globe used Merlin to learn about and appreciate the birds around them. Visit the app store for your phone, search for "Merlin Bird App" and download the app for your phone.

Just for Fun—Merlin vs. Birder (video): Earlier this spring, a special webinar pitted Merlin's bird ID skills against those of a seasoned birder in a first-of-its-kind bird ID trivia contest. See who came out on top! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pAgMLvTp-Y>

(continued from page 1)

Following Forsberg's presentation, the fourth film of a five-part series on Nebraska wetlands will be shown for those who wish to stay for this 23-minute video, a collective effort among the Platte Basin Timelapse team. Just outside Lincoln lie the unique and endangered saline wetlands, home to one of the rarest insects in the world—the Salt Creek tiger beetle—and a host of other migratory and resident species. The saline wetlands provide flood control for the city and recreational opportunities. Meet the researchers and land managers working to protect what remains of the saline wetlands. You will also meet artists and educators, some who have deep history in the saline wetlands and others who have recently discovered and fallen in love with the wetlands.

Editor's Note: Come at 5:30 to share a bounty of great home-cooked favorites, learn about the tern and plover project, enjoy a short video on our native wetlands, and return home with a more informed view of where you live on this planet.

Northern Saw-whet Owl

by Richard Peterson

Puppies and kittens are cute, but we rarely refer to birds as being “cute” in the same way. Birds are regal, handsome, colorful, noisy, smart, stealthy, etc. But to my eye, without question, the northern saw-whet owl is the cutest of the birds we will ever encounter. It's a species native to North America and, like most owls, they are seldom seen but frequently heard.



Saw-whet homes are made in coniferous forests, sometimes in mixed or deciduous riparian woodlands across North America. They live in tree cavities and old nests of woodpeckers or raptors. Depending on where they live, their diet consists of various species of mice and other small rodents. Also included, however, is an occasional vole, shrew, bat, swallow, sparrow, kinglet, or chickadee. They have been known to take on rock pigeons, about four times their size.

Adults saw-whets weigh around three ounces, about the same bulk as an American robin. The relatively large yellowish eyes are hard to miss on such a small body. They have porphyrin pigments in their flight feathers and, when exposed to UV light, the feathers on the ventral side fluoresce neon pink. Go figure. Their ears are also unique as the openings are of different shapes, resulting in sound reaching the ears at different times and at different intensities, enabling them to hunt in complete darkness by using hearing alone.

Females lay 4-6 white eggs with the males doing the hunting, while mother watches and incubates the eggs. Female can have more than one clutch of eggs with different males. Once the feathers have developed in the first brood, she will leave the nest and search for a new mate. She leaves the father behind to care for the first brood. Adults and immatures are preyed upon by martens and corvids (blue jays and the like) and the larger species of hawks and owls.

The northern saw-whet owl is a migratory bird without any strict pattern in its migratory movements. Some are permanent residents; others may wander south during the winter; however, they are an adaptive species that can survive in the cold. Winter visitors occur statewide in Nebraska. When we encounter them, they are often seen in dense thickets, often at eye level.

Although this owl is commonly heard, there have been 11 variations of their vocalization, making identification by sound alone problematic. The common whistle sound or tooting toot call can be heard 200 yards away through thicket or forest and is made April through June while they are looking for mates.

For a description and the sounds of the nine owls you might see in Nebraska, go to <https://wildyards.com/owls-in-nebraska>.

In the Past Half Century

by Arlys Reitan

The Wachiska Audubon Society was chartered by the National Audubon Society in February 1973. Walt Bagley and Betsy (Hancock) Finch were early organizers and served as the chapter's first two presidents. In 1976, National Audubon encouraged chapters to carry out a special project to commemorate the country's bicentennial. Betsy took the idea to heart and began arrangements to research and learn how to rehabilitate injured and orphaned raptors. It was a monumental task that chapter volunteers endorsed. Barns had to be located where the birds could be kept for undetermined lengths of time. Numerous state and federal licenses were required to even keep these birds of prey in confined areas. Food sources needed to be secured to ensure there would always be sufficient supplies. Progress was steady, volunteers hung on, and Betsy was always at-the-ready.

Soon it was evident this new local chapter still in its infancy could not continue the burden of responsibility and funding for the growing raptor project. Eventually the Raptor Recovery Center formed its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

After 18 years in operation, the all-volunteer center faced a crisis in 1984 when the supplier of 90 percent of their food suddenly closed. A front-page article in the January 1995 *Babbling Brook* called for a chapter-wide SOS for raptor food. Even at that time, needed numbers of mice would cost over \$9,000/year.

But Betsy and her small crew hung on. Wachiska was supportive and many volunteers continued to do all they could. More help was found from the public. School programs were given, media coverage was sought, more grant proposals were written; a relay team across Nebraska was formed to transport birds back and forth from where they were shot or trapped to the Raptor Center east of Lincoln. The name changed to Raptor Recovery Nebraska to reflect their growing statewide presence.

Fast forward to today: The organization is now called Raptor Conservation Alliance (RCA) after a couple of name changes and reorganizations. To date the group has rescued and treated over 15,000 raptors from Nebraska and surrounding states. Nearly 50 percent have been released back to the wild—among the highest success rates in the country. RCA is licensed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to handle all raptors, including a special permit to rescue and care for bald eagles.

Several buildings have been built and revamped to house recovering birds. A full-service raptor hospital was built. Two large flight pens were erected where recovering raptors can exercise their wings, build up muscle mass, and regain flight agility needed to again roam the skies.

Now after 47 years, birds of prey in Nebraska still have hope for recovery. And Betsy and her crew are right there to help!! Wachiska Audubon is proud of the success and tremendous efforts expended by this raptor rehab movement.

At Wachiska's "Tour the Wild Side" event on July 29, attendees will be able to sign up for free tickets to tour the Raptor Conservation Alliance premises located near Elmwood, east of Lincoln.

"Raptors are birds of leisure and seem always at ease. How beautiful and majestic are their movements."

John Burroughs, American Naturalist 1837-1921

Wachiska's 2023 "Tour the Wild Side"

This third annual "Tour the Wild Side" will be held rain or shine on **Saturday, July 29, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** Once again, this event is designed to help attendees learn how they can be part of an effort to create patches of habitat that becomes a collective living landscape for birds, bugs, and people.

Sponsors for this year's event are Union Bank, Wild Bird Habitat Store, Great Plains Nursery, Lincoln Electric System, Runza, and U-Stop.

Chances to sign up for door prizes will be possible at each site and will include two tickets to Wachiska's 50th anniversary celebration luncheon and Professor Doug Tallamy's talk. Professor Tallamy, an entomologist, ecologist, and conservationist, has written *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*, and *Nature's Best Hope*. Two of his books will also be prizes on the Tour. Books by local Benjamin Vogt will also be prizes. He has authored *A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future*, and *Prairie Up: An introduction to Natural Garden Design*. Ben owns Monarch Gardens LLC, a prairie garden design company in eastern Nebraska and speaks nationally on garden design and landscape ethics. Another prize is a tour for up to four people to the Raptor Conservation Alliance facilities. The Alliance's mission is to provide care and support for injured and orphaned raptors in preparation for release. Finally, gift certificates can be won for the Hub Café, a local farm-to-market approach to food. The Hub Cafe took its name since it is located at the confluence of Lincoln's bike trail network and overlooks Antelope Creek. Finally, two gift certificates from Urban Trails Gardens in Lincoln will be given away along with two from Nebraska Nursery.

Sites for the Tour are listed below (maps will be available on Wachiska's website and Facebook page):

Richard & Lisa Sutton - 3845 Apple Street

Richard and Lisa's yard sits adjacent to the MoPac Trail in the historic East Campus neighborhood. As a retired landscape architect, Rich has created both planted and built spaces. While still a work in progress, the garden features a small raised-bed area, a workshop with a green roof and a green wall planted with native prairie plants, a rainwater garden, and entry perennial patch. Surrounded by old growth trees and aspen trees, golden currant and penstemon are just a few of the natives in this beautiful yard.



Sue & Larry Dawson - 3750 W Street

Sue and Larry live in the house that Larry grew up in. Sue convinced him to reduce the use of bluegrass over time in order to increase space for gardening. This small corner lot emphasizes low-maintenance native grasses and drought-tolerant plants. Sharing the growing areas are annuals, biennials, perennials, and some unique wildflowers. About 80 percent of the vegetables and herbs are natives. Look for blooming Virginia waterleaf, golden Alexanders, Fremont's clematis, prairie alumroot, wild geranium, and different kinds of baptisia, monarda, and amsonias.



Sue loves seeing insects—especially bees, wasps, and butterflies—frequent the blooms. Plants are provided for caterpillars to eat.



Karen Gilbert - 7215 Shirl Drive

Karen purchased this site in 2011 and immediately started tearing up grass and planting trees even before moving in. It was the typical house with the four-foot strip of bushes down the side. Since then, bald cypress, Kentucky coffee, swamp white oak, American hornbeam, Ft. McNair red horse chestnut, river birch, and seven sons were added. Last fall there was a roost of monarch butterflies in the seven sons.

Natives and varieties appealing to pollinators and butterflies were always mixed in with other plants including those for hummingbirds, but in the fall of 2019 the City took out two ash trees from the street area. The voucher provided for a replacement tree yielded a hornbeam tree. Then in 2020, the grass to the east of the driveway was dug out for a nine-foot by twenty-foot area planted to natives. The next year when it looked unbalanced, the grass on the other side of the drive was removed, replacing it with native plants.

You'll see a variety of plants that begin blooming in March and go through November. There are five varieties of milkweed, pasque flowers, prairie smoke, penstemons, amsonia, coneflowers, compass plant, baptisia, royal catchfly, New Jersey



tea, various mints, liatris, iron weed, primrose, goldenrod, asters, and more. Grasses are mixed in.

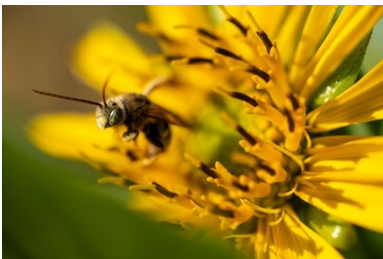
This year's additions to Gilbert's garden include Pennsylvania sedge and Appalachian sedge with flowers mixed in. The goal is to maintain the design principle to plant in odd numbers—good thing that one is an odd number!

The Altman Prairie - 1311 Claremont Street

Located in the floodplain of a once vast saline wetland, Altman Prairie is a jewel of the North Bottoms. Started four years ago in a small portion of the backyard, the prairie's footprint has grown to encompass the front yard, which is home



to many native tallgrass prairie plants and a lone blue spruce that the homeowners can't come to grips with cutting down. Prior to the native planting, a layer of mat-forming grass called zoysia consumed the entire soil canvas. After a few days of meticulously peeling back the zoysia, a space became available to begin planting prairie plugs. Throughout the last few years, the prairie has fluctuated in color and abundance of plants. Many species are seeding themselves into other parts of the space. It has been a learning opportunity to see the dynamic qualities of a prairie, discovering what species thrive and which ones are not suited in an urban setting. One of the most intriguing aspects of planting an urban prairie is the diversity of invertebrate life that has either found its way to this little corner of tallgrass and flowers or has been here all along waiting for the opportunity.



Plant species you may encounter in bloom include asters, a few kinds of blazing star (*Liatris* sp.), evening primrose, wild petunia, goldenrods, bergamot, and obedient plant.

The front space will be accessible for the public to explore the beauty of prairie in an urban setting. Parking can be found throughout the North Bottoms neighborhood or along Claremont Street for a closer walk.

Union Plaza, by The Hub Café - 250 North 21st Street

This six-acre park includes four water features, a festival space, trail connection, artwork, children's play area, pond plaza, outdoor plaza seating, a scenic overlook, and an outdoor amphitheater. Union Plaza is designed to be a community place that benefits the entire city. It has been a catalyst for economic development providing a greenspace connection to UNL and downtown. A variety of landscaping demonstrates drought tolerance, low-maintenance, and wildlife-friendly plantings.

Mike Malloy & Martha Tanner - 5638 Lenox Avenue

When the homeowners purchased their house in May 2021, the back yard was a disaster. A dozen scrub trees ringed the lot, and Virginia creeper had completely covered a 10-foot-tall shed along with a satellite dish that was discovered while cutting back the vines. After much labor, planting began that September. There are now about 20 kinds of plants including coneflower, golden alexanders, hyssop, blazing star, and columbine. The plants really established themselves in 2021 and are thriving this year despite the drought. After enjoying the 2022 Wild Side Tour, Mike and Martha volunteered to share their own yard. They are in the second year of their project to build prairie and other pollinator habitats. Numerous butterflies, bees, and birds visit the yard every day, and it is hoped that you will, too.



Assurity Life Insurance Company - 2000 Q Street

When Assurity broke ground in 2009, they wanted to provide a first-class working environment and minimize their impact on the environment. In 2013, the Assurity Center was awarded LEED Gold certification – the first large office building in Lincoln to earn that status.

The features of their building and landscaping, combined with other sustainable business practices, have allowed them to cut energy consumption by more than 50 percent in the past decade. The building is positioned to take advantage of natural sunlight: More than 80 percent of office spaces receive sufficient daylight to work free of other lighting. Occupancy sensors, timed lighting, and LED technology also reduce energy consumption. Living roofs on the north and south sides of the building provide natural insulation and are designed to last longer than their manmade counterparts. It's also home to native flora and fauna. The landscaping includes bioswales (rain gardens) that allow rainwater to infiltrate the subsoil. Only native and naturalized plant species, including drought-tolerant fescue grass, grow on their grounds. Come and see the wonderful plantings.

This site offers an opportunity to ask questions and tour this highly visible landscape from designer Bryan Kinghorn of Kinghorn Gardens.

Climate Change Update

by Marilyn McNabb

National Audubon is moving toward adoption of a strategic plan that is as extremely ambitious as it needs to be, to face our current realities. National Audubon's VP for Climate wrote, "As our 'Survival By Degrees' report shows, two-thirds of North American bird species could face extinction if we fail to slow the rate of global temperature rise."

The Associated Press reported a June 5 announcement from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration "that the carbon dioxide level measured in May in Hawaii averaged 424 parts per million. That's three parts per million more than last year's May average and 51 percent higher than pre-industrial levels of 280 ppm. It is one of the largest annual May-to-May increases in carbon dioxide levels on record."

In a mid-June webinar, Audubon's Chief Scientist Chad Wilsey stated that if we take no action, two-thirds of North America's bird species are at risk: 389 species "on the brink." Very ambitious habitat conservation is key to needed actions—connected (but not contiguous) climate resilient lands and waters across North and South America.

Strategies include established refuges as well as working lands—regenerative agriculture, conservation ranching, and active forest management. Key partners are in Canada, including First Nations; Mexico; Panama; Columbia; and Chile. Discussions about the plan will continue.

Here is an important climate-related action Wachiska supporters can take right now.

Federal permitting reform refers to the environmental and technical approvals needed from federal agencies for energy projects like a windfarm or large solar project or electrical transmission lines. The potential investment in clean energy in the Inflation Reduction Act can't be put into effect unless there is permitting reform. While there is bipartisan support for permitting reform, the parties often have different ideas as to what "reform" means. So, negotiations are required across party lines, which is one of the most constructive processes we can encourage.

You can contact Congressman Mike Flood as well as Senators Deb Fischer and Pete Ricketts. Audubon's position is that we need federal permitting reform to speed up deployment of clean energy while balancing that goal with protecting our lands, waters, wildlife, and communities. For updates, check National Audubon's website, probably under "press room," as this discussion moves forward.

"Red Tape is Slowing the Shifts to Renewables," reports Akielly Hu for Grist, June 8. (Grist Magazine is a nonprofit, independent media organization dedicated to reporting stories

of climate solutions and a just future.) Delays in approvals to connect projects to the grid are resulting from two shortages: not enough staff to process projects and too few transmission lines. Neither of these major problems was addressed in the debt ceiling deal. According to a spokesman with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the interconnection system was originally designed to process a few centralized fossil fuel power plants rather than thousands of mostly smaller renewable projects, now in a huge backlog. A report by LBNL estimates that to achieve 100 percent clean electricity by 2035, power lines cutting across state lines will need to double or triple in capacity. Congressional action can address both of these barriers.

Upcoming Programs at Spring Creek Prairie

Third Tuesday Bird Outing

Tuesday, July 18, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

A knowledgeable bird guide will lead this outing along the prairie trails. Meet fellow birders and learn the birds of the prairie. Free admission, registration requested.

Summer Accessible Bird Outings

Mondays, July 10, July 17, & August 21 – 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Nebraska's BIRDABILITY captain, Cassandra Dean, will lead these free low-impact and accessible birding outings in and around the picnic area. Outings will be mostly stationary, near bathrooms.

More information on these and other programs can be found at <https://springcreek.audubon.org/events>.

Questions to 402-797-2301;
scp@audubon.org.



A Morning at Dieken Prairie

by Linda Brown

I treated myself to a foray with seed gatherers at Dieken Prairie, south of Unadilla, on the second Saturday in June. I drove my own car because I feared that I might not have the stamina to last for the entire morning. Oh, contrar! The weather was cool and cloudy, and the company, mostly conservation committee people, was superb. I was reading Robin Kimmerer's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. I asked Ross Scott if he knew sweet grass, *Hierchloe odorata*. He told me it comes from wetter areas in places like Minnesota and showed me a reference. I now wonder if it could grow on one of our wet prairies, like Knott or Fertig?

Tim Knott showed me how to stroke the blade of the porcupine grass to remove the long drill-like seed structure. As we slowly moved through the prairie gathering the porcupine grass seed, we spotted the last blooming pink phlox and the first yellow black-eyed Susan. When I thought I heard a bobolink, Tim showed me how he samples the singing birds using Merlin on his phone. It did not pick up the bobolink, but I was intrigued. I updated my own Merlin app as soon as I got home and have since taught three people how to use it. (See article on page 2.)

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 Pete Ricketts

1128 Lincoln Mall Ste 305, 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>

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>

Congressman Mike Flood

301 S 13th St Ste 100, Lincoln NE 68508 (1st 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 (2nd 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 (3rd 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 10th St Rm 110, Lincoln NE 68508
Phone: 402-441-7447 Fax: 402-441-6301
E-mail: commish@lancaster.ne.gov

Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10th St Rm 301, Lincoln NE 68508-2828
Phone: 402-441-7511 Fax: 402-441-7120
E-mail: mayor@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln City Council

402-441-7515

E-mail: councilpacket@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln Journal Star

Letters to the editor, 21st and N St, Lincoln NE 68508
E-mail: 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.

Sign Up to Receive *The Babbling Brook* Online

You can help Wachiska save paper and reduce the cost of printing and mailing *The Babbling Brook*. Since 2015, the newsletter has been posted online at the beginning of each month. Electronic subscribers receive a Mailchimp email with a link to the online issue.

About 340 members and Friends currently receive their monthly newsletters electronically. Additional advantages are that pictures are in color and you can adjust the size of print. If you would like to switch from paper to online delivery, send an email to newsletter@WachiskaAudubon.org and put "Electronic Newsletter" in the subject line, or let Arlys know your wishes and she'll take care of the switch. Thanks for helping save trees and postage!

WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2023

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

OFFICERS

President *Theresa Pella
Vice President..... *Andrea Faas
Secretary *April Stevenson
Treasurer *Dylan Aufdenkamp

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 Luttich
Director at Large *Mercy Manzanares
Director at Large *Kris Powers
Conservation..... *Ross Scott
Education/Outreach *Tim Knott

*Denotes voting Board member

For contact information of officers and committee chairs, call the Wachiska office at 402-486-4846.

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.

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.

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 bit 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.

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**.

