

*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

OCTOBER 2016

Volume 25 - Issue 10

General Meeting — Thursday, October 13, 7:00 p.m., Union College Dick Auditorium, 3800 South 48th Street, Lincoln

The Changeable Weather of Nebraska

by Cathy Zapotocny, Meteorologist, National Weather Service, Omaha/Valley

If you have lived in Nebraska for any period of time, you can count on experiencing a range of summer thunderstorms with severe weather and plentiful rains, winter snow and cold with a mix of heat, drought, wind, and ice mixed in. Nebraska has been my home for the last 30 years, and having worked at the National Weather Service in Omaha/Valley for the last 25 years, it's been a privilege to serve Nebraska and Iowa.



Cathy Zapotocny

Wachiska's October general meeting program will highlight what the National Weather Service does, recent weather events, what is the difference between weather and climate, and what to expect this coming winter.

The National Weather Service has 122 weather forecast offices, 13 river forecast centers, and nine national centers, in addition to other support offices. Our mission is to provide weather, water, and climate data; forecasts; and warnings for the protection of life and property and enhancement of the national economy. Our vision is to be a Weather-Ready Nation, where society is prepared and responds to weather-dependent events.

As meteorologists, we make forecast and warning decisions with incomplete information. No one can observe the future. Forecasters utilize satellite imagery, surface and upper air observations, radar data, information from numerical weather prediction models, and their experience and pattern recognition to attempt to predict what will happen weather-wise over the next seven to 10 days. For longer range forecasts with timescales of weeks or years, the Climate Prediction Center monitors teleconnections. This includes sea surface temperatures and ENSO (El-Niño and Southern Oscillation) conditions, the North Atlantic Oscillation, and others and what has happened in the past (analog) and utilizes climate forecast system models.

Cathy Zapotocny was born and raised in the Madison, Wisconsin, area and earned a BA in meteorology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a certificate in business from Creighton University, and an MBA from UNO. She joined the National Weather Service in 1991 and is a member of the American Meteorological Society, the National Weather Association, and the local Omaha/Offutt Chapter of AMS/NWA.

Join Wachiska on **Thursday, October 13, at 7:00 p.m.** for this free public presentation in the Union College Dick Auditorium, 3800 South 48th Street in Lincoln. Free parking is available on 48th 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 following the talk.

Consider ordering a beautiful 2017 Audubon calendar at the general meeting. Ordering deadline has been extended to that night (see page 4).

Calendar

October

- 4 Board Meeting, Wachiska office, 7:00 p.m.
- 13 General Meeting, "The Changeable Weather of Nebraska," by Cathy Zapotocny, NOAA/National Weather Service, Union College, 7:00 p.m.
- 13 Extended deadline for ordering *Audubon* calendars (page 4)
- 14 Newsletter deadline, Wachiska office, 5:00 p.m.
- 16 Gayfeather harvesting at Ernie's prairie, 12:00 noon (page 2)
- 16 Fall field trip to Prairie Pines, 2:00 p.m. (page 2)
- 17 Conservation Committee, Wachiska office, 5:30 p.m.
- 27 Legislation Committee, DaVinci's, 11th & G, 6:00 p.m.

NO Education Committee meeting scheduled this month



Field Trip

by John Carlini, Field Trip Chair

Autumn Tour of Prairie Pines Arboretum with Sue Kohles

Autumn is nature's annual showcase for trees and the perfect time of year to visit the 145-acre Prairie Pines Arboretum northeast of Lincoln. The late Professor of Forestry Walt Bagley and his wife, Virginia, originally lived there for over 50 years and now their legacy lives on in the more than 200 species of trees they planted before donating this wildlife oasis to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for research. The Bagleys also provided the first home to Raptor Recovery Nebraska and were the first in the state to obtain a conservation easement on their land. In addition, Walt is credited as being a co-founder of Wachiska Audubon which was chartered in 1973. Walt passed away this spring at the age of 99.

Longtime Wachiska volunteer Sue Kohles will be guiding our tour of the property. Sue is curator of the nonprofit group "Prairie Pines Pals" that supports educational opportunities and enthusiastically works to fulfill that mission at the arboretum. There's an assortment of habitat to explore including 20 acres of woodland, 10 acres of virgin prairie, 30 acres of seeded prairie grasses and wildflowers, field windbreaks and waterways, and a Christmas tree plantation.

We'll meet on **Sunday, October 16, at 2:00 p.m.** by the State Capitol in Lincoln, 15th and H streets across from the governor's mansion. Participants can caravan or carpool to our destination at North 112th and Adams streets or join us about 2:30 p.m. at the arboretum. There is no fee and the public is welcome. If you have questions, call John at 402-475-7275.

Save the Date: Lunch & Learn

Join us to learn more about Wachiska's Prairie Preservation efforts and how your charitable gifts can help protect our endangered tallgrass prairies. **Dr. Paul Johnsgard will give a short talk on "Preserving Our Prairie Legacy."**

Prairie Preservation Lunch & Learn

**Thursday, October 20, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at the
Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, in Lincoln**

RSVP Required for Lunch

Please contact Linda Brown at linar1brown@gmail.com
Cell 402-318-1522 Home 402-489-2381

Space is limited. Please make your reservation soon.

Gayfeather Seed Harvest Help Needed

by Ernie Rousek, Conservation Committee

For a number of years, Wachiska members have harvested gayfeather seeds from my field in Seward County, as a fund raiser. These seeds with their fluffy attachments have been taken to the Stock Seed Farms near Murdock where they are cleaned and their price figured on a clean-seed basis.

Last year we had a great turnout of 66 Wachiska seed harvesters who picked a total of 148 pounds of cleaned seed for which Wachiska received \$10,302. By running this money through the Lincoln Community Foundation's Give to Lincoln Day campaign last May, Wachiska received an additional \$1,500 from the matching fund portion. We plan to do this again next year.

Due to increased concern over the loss of pollinating insects, there is more interest in planting prairie flowers. The federal government CRP planting requirements have been requiring the inclusion of prairie flowers along with native grasses. As a result, the price of prairie flower seed has greatly increased. About 10 years ago we got \$35/lb. for our gayfeather seed; last May our payment for our 2015 harvest brought \$70/lb.

Our gayfeather harvest this year will be held on **Sunday, October 16, from 12:00 noon on.** To get to this flower field, go west on "O" Street to West 168th Street (one mile past the roundabout) to the Pleasant Dale Cemetery. Turn north about 200 yards to the driveway with a blue 915 sign. Bring leather gloves and a plastic bucket. I will have some extra buckets and drinking water available. Hope to see a good Audubon crowd.

Editor's Note: Let's show Ernie we can surpass the record 66 people who showed up to help last year!

Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch

The Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch is a 13-mile corridor of virgin and restored prairie connecting the Pioneers Park Nature Center along the Haines Branch Creek, through the Village of Denton, and on to Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. Funding is provided by the Nebraska Environmental Trust and matching partners. To learn more about the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch, visit prairiecorridor.org.

Hawk Watching North of Omaha

Witness the fall migration of raptors as they soar along the "hawk highway" at Hitchcock Nature Center near Crescent, Iowa. Recognized as one of the top 25 hawk watches in North America, thousands of eagles, hawks, and other raptors pass through the area as they migrate south. Plan a trip to see this spectacle this fall.

Seed Collecting on Dieken Prairie

by Ernie Rousek, Conservation Committee



Rachel Simpson

On a perfect Saturday morning of July 30th, 12 Wachiska members and friends gathered at Dieken Prairie to harvest New Jersey tea seed pods as part of a fundraising effort to support our prairie preservation efforts. Conservation committee members Tim Knott, Beth Coufal, Ross Scott, and I attended along with Wachiska members Rachel Simpson, Lana Novak, Elizabeth and Daniel Nelson, and a few others whose names I'm sorry I did not collect. Seed harvest started about 8:30 a.m. Prairie vegetation was very wet but drying out. Seed pods were hard, indicating maturity.

By 11:00 a.m. the group had two large paper lawn bags filled with New Jersey tea seed heads as well as a fair amount of stems and leaves. Although the temperature was comfortable, it was decided that everyone had had enough nature involvement and back-bending for one day. I suggested stopping at the Unadilla Café for lunch and nine people agreed. We found a table for nine and enjoyed a nice lunch and good conversation.

Tim hauled the bags of seed to my house. There were also some purple prairie clover and black-eyed Susan heads. I laid out a couple of large sheets on the concrete below my deck and spread the contents of the two bags on them. A couple of days of exposure to balmy breezes pretty well dried out the harvest. I had a large screen with wooden sides which I put over a cart and proceeded to rub the harvest over this screen. It took quite a bit of rubbing to loosen the seeds and force them through the screen. There was quite a bit of leaf and stem material that went through the screen along with the seed pods, so I rigged up a couple of fans to create a breeze. I sifted the screened pods down over this breeze which took out most of the inert material.

We ended up with six gallons (16 pounds) of screened New Jersey tea pods which Kay Kottas picked up. She uses a hammer mill with plastic hammers to remove the seeds from their pods. There is a fairly good market for these seeds, so we are anxiously waiting to hear from Kay how much the chapter will receive from this fundraising attempt. Due to the nature of seed preparation, it will be awhile before we know the exact amount of money to expect from this endeavor, according to Kay.

Close your blinds at night and turn off lights you aren't using. Some birds use constellations to guide them on their annual migrations, and bright lights from windows and skylights can disrupt their steering senses.



News on the Membership Front

by Arlys Reitan

More and more natureophiles (lovers of nature) are joining the Friends of Wachiska membership category. Recently these folks have been added to the flock:

Michael Smith	Craig Horn
Robert Muchel	Craig Lawson & Pippa White Lawson
Dorothy Holdren	Stu Luttich
Derald Kohles	Blair & Deanna Denny

Welcome to all of our newest recruits. We hope to see you at an upcoming event.

After serving as Wachiska's membership chair for a dozen years, Joyce Vannier is turning her weekly responsibilities over to Jami Nelson. Jami recently joined Wachiska and jumped right in to help in this area. Joyce will continue to help when needed.

Joyce and her husband, Lyle, have been active Audubon members since before our chapter was chartered. Now retired, they are spending time with their great-granddaughter and continue to travel.

Jami works part-time in a floral shop and continues to fix up her home which she recently purchased.

Together with Barb Francis, Lana Novak and Linda Brown, these gals make up Wachiska's membership committee. Each has her particular duties but are cross-training for the unexpected. A million thanks to all of them with special appreciation to Joyce and a hearty welcome to Jami!



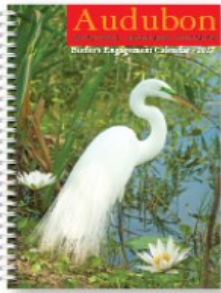
Joyce Vannier and Jami Nelson

Community Forestry Program

Fall is a good time to plant trees. The Lincoln Parks and Rec Department offers a street tree voucher plan—a cost-share assistance program to property owners in Lincoln wanting to purchase and plant a street tree on the city right-of-way adjacent to their property. The \$50 voucher is good toward the purchase and installation of a tree at participating local nurseries. The balance of the cost of the tree and the planting will be at the homeowner's expense.

Certain conditions and requirements apply to this street tree voucher program. Call 402-441-7847 to submit a request or for more information.

The 2017 Calendars from Audubon



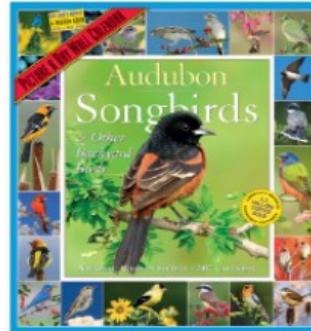
BIRDER'S ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR

The perennially bestselling engagement calendar is an intimate, full-color birding experience. You'll find the gorgeous Blue Jay, with its distinctive wing patterns, and the stunning Snowy Owl while you write in your weekly appointments. Now with a Bird Log to record your sightings!

6¼" x 9¼" • \$14.99 retail
printed on FSC-certified paper



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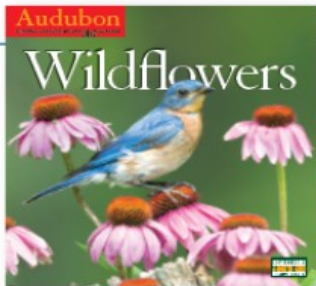
SONGBIRDS PICTURE-A-DAY® WALL CALENDAR

A delightful tribute to the backyard songsters who bring their color and music to every day, each month features a large photograph at the top of the page, plus smaller images throughout the grid and detailed text describing species characteristics, songs and calls, migration patterns, and more!

12" x 14" • \$14.99 retail



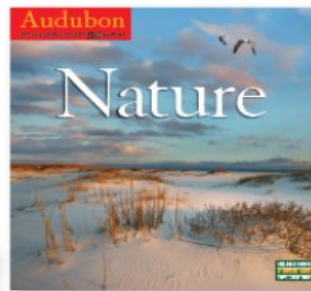
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Enjoy twelve portraits of North American blooms photographed in their native habitats. The vibrant petals of California Poppies and the incomparable desert landscape of red rock formations, cacti, and golden Brittlebrush deliver a truly beautiful foray into nature's gardens.

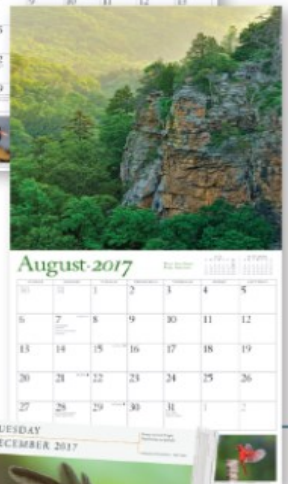
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NATURE WALL CALENDAR

Pristine, dramatic, and unforgettable, each image is a tribute to the power and beauty of nature. Here you'll find sunlight streaming through the bold cypresses in a Louisiana swamp, a flock of snow geese covering the sky in Montana, and ten other stunning American natural treasures and landscapes.

12" x 12" • \$14.99 retail
printed on FSC-certified paper



BIRDS GALLERY CALENDAR

An elegant gift for the birding enthusiast, the BIRDS GALLERY CALENDAR delivers a bird for every day! From a flock of scarlet Ibises in flight to the Gentoo Penguin splashing into chilly ocean waters, hundreds of stunning species from around the world are showcased up close and in full color.

6¼" x 7¼" • \$16.99 retail



NOTE: Ordering deadline for Audubon calendars has been extended to October 13—but not a day later! Calendars above marked \$14.99 sell for \$16 with tax and shipping included in that price. Those marked \$16.99 sell for \$18 including tax and shipping. All orders will come to the Wachiska office for pick up. Call or email the Wachiska office to order by October 13 or tell Arlys your order at the October general meeting. Payment will be due at time of pick up in mid-November. These make wonderful holiday gifts. Check the website for this magnificent color poster. **Thank you so very much for your support in this fundraiser for Wachiska Audubon.**



From the Board ...

by Sam Truax, Legislation Committee Representative

Consider Purchasing a Habitat Stamp

There are conflicts in doing our jobs and sometimes the environment is affected. The universities do a great job of providing the research to increase food production to feed the ever-increasing world population. Farmers are astute enough to utilize the new sciences to increase their production. They are all doing their jobs well. The conflict is that these advances affect ecology. The massive monocultural landscapes of golden grain stubble fields framed by massive green corn fields during certain times of the year give Nebraska an impressive portrait to residents and travelers. So food production and landscape vistas may be impressive, but the conflict is that these impressive characteristics are harmful to the ecology of our state. Birds and wildlife cannot benefit or even survive well in this monocultural environment. Plant diversity is necessary. Genetically modified crops increase production by eliminating plant diversity. The insects and forbs that are required for young birds, animals, and pollinators to thrive and mature cannot exist in genetically modified crop fields where pesticides and herbicides eliminate all plants and insects that may compete with the crop growth.

Further pressure on the natural ecology comes from economics and the U.S. Department of Agriculture policies. An example is that in 2012, 54,000 acres of Nebraska lands were converted from possible wildlife-supporting Conservation Reserve Program areas to crop production areas.

An important progress offsetting this current trend is the establishment and maintenance of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and natural areas by the state Game and Parks Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Natural Resources Districts (NRDs). The NRDs are primarily supported by local taxes. But Game and Parks and FWS funds for these WMAs come primarily from excise taxes on hunting equipment, to some degree on fishing equipment, and to a significant degree on the sale of hunting and fishing permits and habitat stamps. While hunting permits have been declining nationally and in Nebraska, the use of the WMAs by bird watchers, hikers, and other non-hunting outdoor recreation participants has increased significantly.

During the discussions and recent passage of H.R. 5650, the Recovering Americas Wildlife Act, it was stated that "America's hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and boaters have been the primary funders of state-based conservation efforts to the day." This bill designates some federal funds from energy and mineral development to assist with conservation efforts. This bill, strongly supported by Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, may be a big help to our natural environment, but is it enough?

If we who are interested in the well-being of birds and wildlife habitat want to contribute to offsetting the habitat declines caused by current agricultural practices, we can purchase habitat stamps available from Game and Parks or hunting permits, even if we have no intention of hunting.

To purchase a habitat stamp, visit: <https://ngpc-permits.ne.gov/NGPC-PS/faces/public/welcome>.

Birdseed Available

After our combined garage sale and Fall Birdseed Sale, the following birdseed is available for purchase. Please contact Arlys in the office ASAP if you can use any of this seed:

4 Classic Audubon Mix, 20-lb. bag	\$18/bag
1 Woodpecker Gourmet, 20-lb. bag	\$35/bag
1 Bushy Tail Treat, 20-lb. bag	\$31/bag
4 Nyjer Thistle, 8-lb. bag	\$14/bag
1 Sunflower Seed, Black Oil, 25-lb. bag	\$15/bag
22 High Energy Treat Suet Cakes	\$2.50/cake
6 Berry Treat Suet Cakes	\$2.50/cake
22 No-Melt Suet Dough Suet Cakes	\$2.50/cake

Keep Recycling Those Aluminum Cans

A-Can Recycling Center recently sent Wachiska a check for \$46.35 for 154 pounds of aluminum cans our members and friends dropped off for Wachiska's credit so far this year. This comes to 30 cents/pound for aluminum saved from the landfill. Thanks to Connie and Ben Dahlberg and crew for continuing this program for Wachiska's coffers; the biggest thank you goes to all those supporters who continue to participate in this recycling effort.

If you know of a business or other group that would be willing to help Wachiska by donating their aluminum cans, call the office or A-Can Recycling.

SALES TAX AND SHIPPING IS INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE PRICES.

Climate Change Update

by Marilyn McNabb

Washington State Audubon is supporting a ballot initiative for November that will tax carbon. They say it is "one of the most important things we can do to protect birds and people from the threat of climate change." Initiative 732 will balance a price on consumption of fossil fuels with reductions in sales tax for consumers and business and occupation tax for manufacturers, as well as annual rebates of up to \$1,500 for 400,000 low-income working households.

A new analysis shows that I-732 will be effective in reducing carbon emissions, keeping industry at home, and cushioning lower-income Washingtonians in the transition from carbon-based fuels to clean energy. The study was done by the well-respected environmental group, the Sightline Institute. Check out <http://www.carbontax.org/blog/>.

National Audubon's study shows climate change to be the greatest threat to North American birds. Check out <http://climate.audubon.org/>. While they are working diligently to pass I-732, Washington Audubon will continue to advocate for more clean energy, more restraints on greenhouse gas emissions, and more protected areas for birds.

Combined Birdseed Sale/Garage Sale

It was a LOT of work, but the combined fundraisers were a success! We sold lots of "stuff" which totaled \$830 for the garage sale. There is still birdseed remaining, so final figures are not in for seed sold. See page 5 for birdseed remaining for sale.

Elizabeth Nelson and Arlys Reitan headed up this effort with the following helping in numerous ways: Cathy Shaner, Tim Knott, Dan Knott, George Maly, Ninette Lookabaugh, Patty Spitzer, Mary Rogge, Jeanette Nakada, Jeff Meyer, Sara Meyer, John

Yurges, Arnold Mendenhall, Gary Summers, Anne Vidaver, Ken Reitan, Rachel Simpson, Linda Brown, Wyatt Nelson.

There are always some who warrant an extra hearty pat on the back. This time it was Elizabeth and Daniel Nelson for offering their garages for our sale in addition to providing tables, tarps, and any other things needed.

We appreciated those who donated items to sell as well as tables, treats, and fun.



Arlys Reitan and Elizabeth Nelson

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Lincoln City Council

402-441-7515
E-mail: council@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln Journal Star

Letters to the editor, 926 P 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.

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- _____ \$500 Bald Eagle Friend
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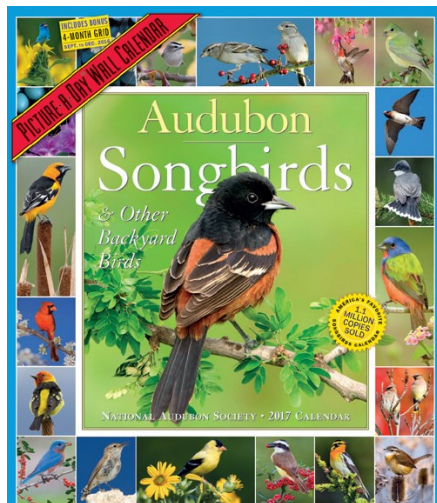
Please note: If you are already a member of National Audubon Society (NAS) you automatically become a member of Wachiska, but not a Wachiska Friend member. Only Wachiska Friends receive the printed monthly newsletter each month. If you wish to join NAS or receive *Audubon* magazine, please contact National Audubon Society directly.



American Goldfinch family

Time to Order 2017 Audubon Calendars

The deadline has been extended for ordering the 2017 Audubon calendars. See page 4 for descriptions and visit our website to enjoy each in full color. Prices are the same as last year. Let Arlys know which titles you would like. The order goes in October 14. You will be contacted in mid-November. Payment due when you pick up.



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WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2016

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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**.