



**Wachiska**  
Audubon Society

*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 49th Year of Protecting Nature 1973 - 2022*

**APRIL 2022**

**Volume 31 - Issue 4**

**Wachiska Program — Thursday, April 14, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom web conference (registration required)**  
**Link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlucu2rqTouEtVs1wX164WIXGEtAHZB7gFg>**

## Developing a Motus Network in the Great Plains and the Chihuahuan Desert

*by Matt Webb, Avian Ecologist and Motus Wildlife Tracking System Coordinator  
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies*

Over the past 50 years, grassland birds have experienced some of the steepest population declines of any avian guild. Bird Conservancy of the Rockies has been working for the past decade to understand the causes of these declines in order to provide practitioners the necessary information to better conserve these important birds. However, the migration seasons still hold some of the biggest mysteries of the entire year. Avian ecologists still do not know exactly where these birds travel or what habitats they use during their migration.



The Motus Wildlife Tracking System, a worldwide network of automated radio telemetry stations, is one tool we can use to learn the answers to these questions. Bird Conservancy of the Rockies is working to develop a large-scale network of Motus receiver stations and deploy transmitter tags on grassland birds

across the Great Plains and the Chihuahuan Desert. This work will help fill these knowledge gaps and will ultimately help to reverse the steep declines we've been seeing in grassland bird populations.

**Matt Webb** is an avian ecologist with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, leading their efforts to build out the Motus network in the Great Plains and the Chihuahuan Desert. He previously worked for the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he founded BirdSafe Pittsburgh, a program studying bird-window collisions throughout the city. During that time, he was also instrumental in incorporating the Motus Wildlife Tracking System into the ongoing avian research at the museum's research station at Powdermill Nature Reserve. Matt holds a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology and a master's in conservation leadership, both from Colorado State University, in his hometown of Fort Collins. During our Zoom program, which will be combined with that of the Audubon Society of Omaha, Matt will speak on the Motus Wildlife System and its application for avian tracking and research.

### Calendar

#### April

- 4 Education Committee via Zoom, 6:00 p.m.
- 11 Conservation Committee via Zoom, 6:30 p.m.
- 14 General Meeting via Zoom, "Developing a Motus Network in the Great Plains and the Chihuahuan Desert," by Matt Webb, 7:00 p.m. (**NOTE required registration**)
- 15 Newsletter deadline in Wachiska office, 5:00 p.m.
- 19 Board Meeting via Zoom, 7:00 p.m.
- 24 Field Trip to Marsh Wren Community Wetlands, 9:00 a.m.

Join Wachiska and ASO for our next Zoom program on **Thursday, April 14, at 7:00 p.m.** This free, public presentation is available to those who register in advance at this website: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlucu2rqTouEtVs1wX164WIXGEtAHZB7gFg>.

Copy and paste this link into your browser or go to Wachiska's website and click on the link directly from the notice to register. You will then receive a confirmation email with the meeting number and password. Keep that and a few minutes before the program is to begin, click on that confirmation, and you'll be invited into the meeting. Encourage friends and colleagues to join us, too.

# Executive Director's Message

by Mark Brohman

The legislative session is drawing to a close. April 5 is the 53rd day of this 60-day session scheduled to end April 20. There were a lot of federal and state dollars spent this session. For the first time in recent history, the State had some large funds to work with because of better-than-expected tax receipts and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds. We continue to monitor LB1135, which prohibits perpetual conservation easements in Nebraska and limits conservation easements to 99 years or less. The bill also makes it easier for county officials to turn down easements. It appears LB1135 is dead this session, but we suspect it will be back next year.



Wachiska has sponsored a couple of bird tours this year, and we have successfully held a few controlled burns on our prairies, conducted by Kent Pfeiffer and his crew with the Northern Prairies Land Trust. We have several community events coming up, including booths at the Hop-A-Long April 9, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Whitehall Mansion, Return of the Thunderbird celebration April 10, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the Indian Center, and Earth Day at Innovation Campus, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., on April 23. We will be hosting the City Nature Challenge May 1, 1:00-3:00 p.m. at the Walt Branch Library. Wachiska will also be participating in the Lower Platte South NRD's Family Nature Nights at Lincoln elementary schools: April 7 at Eastridge 6:00-7:00 p.m., April 12 at Riley 6:30-7:30 p.m., and April 21 at Lakeview 6:30-7:30 p.m. Let me know if you are interested in volunteering at any of these events.

The sandhill cranes did not disappoint again this year. They are passing through Nebraska like they have for thousands of years along with all the waterfowl and shorebirds heading north. The sandhill crane was named the State Migratory Bird by Governor Ricketts on March 21 during a press conference at the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary.

## Attention All Bird Lovers

Wildlife Rescue Team, Inc., is looking for individuals to join their group to care for birds this spring and summer. If you have a passion for wildlife and love watching, feeding, and admiring songbirds or any other wildlife, contact this nonprofit group of dedicated volunteers who do all the rehabbing at their own homes. This makes it convenient for you to stay at home and take care of the birds and/or other wildlife. If you can't have animals at your residence, there are many other volunteer opportunities for you! Call 402-473-1951 or email [contact@wildliferescueteamincne.org](mailto:contact@wildliferescueteamincne.org). Check out their website at [wildliferescueteamincne.org](http://wildliferescueteamincne.org).

## Wachiska's Annual Birdathon Begins this Month

by Tim Knott

It's the biggest fundraiser of the year. **Birdathon 2022 will officially take place May 14-15.** Starting on April 1, Wachiska begins its 34<sup>th</sup> annual Birdathon fund drive with the mailing of the Birdathon letter to each of our members, donors, and friends. Look for your Birdathon letter in your mailbox and contribute as you can. Wachiska has been relying on your donations to make things happen since 1988. Thank you for your consideration.

This past year was particularly busy and productive for Wachiska. We updated our chapter's strategic plan which directs where we want to go as an organization in the coming years. We hired an experienced manager, Mark Brohman, as our first executive director to keep us moving forward. Thanks to botanist Kay Kottas and her staff at Prairie Legacy, an evaluation was completed of all the prairie easements the chapter holds. In order to ensure that each property is being managed as well as it can be, we soon will begin a series of informal conferences with each of the prairie owners.

Wachiska still must pay our regular bills. To continue to serve Southeastern Nebraska, we need every supporter to contribute each year. Those gifts make possible our legislation committee's work in the State Legislature, our continuing responsibilities with prairie protection by the conservation committee, and our education committee's efforts to get young people in touch with nature, along with numerous other programs.

When you receive your Birdathon letter, put it in a safe place. When you make out your bills, send Wachiska a generous check using the return envelope or donate online using the Wachiska webpage. Many people also **donate to Wachiska anytime during the month of May to Give to Lincoln Day.** Sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation, Give to Lincoln Day on **May 26**, gives people the opportunity to donate online and support the nonprofit of their choice while taking advantage of a large matching grant. Watch next month's newsletter for details on Wachiska's annual Birdathon bird hikes later in May as well as specifics for Give to Lincoln Day. Spring is always busy for Wachiskans!

## Climate Signs Available

Stop by the Wachiska office and pick up your Climate yard sign. Join your friends and neighbors to show your concern about our climate and our elected officials. Yard signs that say, "VOTE with CLIMATE in Mind" are available for \$10 each. Made of durable material, the signs come with a metal holder to push into the ground. We encourage you to put your signs out now until the May elections and again in the fall ahead of the November elections. You can also keep the signs in your yard year around. These signs are durable and could easily last several years.



## Beaver

by Richard Peterson

Beavers are semiaquatic rodents of the temperate Northern Hemisphere. The North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) and the Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*) have been hunted, trapped, and exploited for centuries for their meat, fur, and castoreum. The Catholic Church once thought the beaver was part beast and part fish and allowed the scaly, fish-like tail to be eaten on meatless Fridays during Lent. The meat has been described as tasting like nicely dressed eel.



Beaver hats were made from felted beaver fur and were fashionable in Europe from 1550-1850. Wars were fought that were caused by or contributed to the access to the beaver and their pelts. First were the Beaver Wars, also called the Iroquois Wars or the French and Iroquois Wars, a series of conflicts during the 1600s. King William's War was the North American theater of the Nine Years War (1688-1697). The French and Indian War (1754-1763) pitted the colonies of British America against those of New France. Between 1860 and 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company and others in the U.S. bought over 150,000 beaver pelts per year.

To make the felt, "the under hairs were shaved from the beaver pelt and mixed with a vibrating hatter's bow. The matted fabric was pummeled and boiled repeatedly, resulting in a shrunken and thickened felt. Filled (laid) over a hat-form block, the felt was pressed and steamed into shape. They then brushed the outside surface to a sheen." Some of the hat styles for civil status were the Wellington (1820-1840), Paris beau (1815), D'Orsay (1820), and the Regent (1825). A change in hat styles probably saved the beaver from extinction.

Castoreum is a yellowish exudate from the castor sacs of mature beavers. Both sexes have a pair of castor sacs and a pair of anal glands, located in two cavities under the skin between the pelvis and the base of the tail. Beaver use it with their urine to scent mark their territory. Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) suggested that castoreum could treat vertigo, seizures, flatulence, sciatica, stomach disease, and epilepsy. When used as a tincture in the perfume industry, the dried beaver castor sacs are aged for two or more years. Some classic perfumes that incorporate castor are Emeraude, Chanel Antaeus, Cuir de Russie, Magie Noire, Lancôme Caractère, Hechter Madame, Givenchy III, Shalimar, and other "leather" themed products. The annual use of castoreum extract as a food flavoring is around 300 pounds. Castoreum is traditionally used in Sweden for flavoring a schnapps named Båverhojt (literally, *beaver shout*). It was also considered for use to add to the flavor and odor of cigarettes. Medieval beekeepers used it to increase honey production.

Today, beavers are mainly hunted for recreation and population management. Killing anything for recreation is a mind-boggling waste of time.

## Celebrate Arbor Day in April!

by Lorrie Benson, Co-chair

Faith to Forest Steering Committee

Faith to Forest, the loose coalition of 29 Lincoln faith communities celebrating and caring for trees in 2022, is encouraging two actions in April.

First, plant a tree to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Arbor Day. We've all learned a lot about the value—especially for birds—of planting native and adapted species, so be thoughtful about what and where you plant. You can get great advice on what to plant from [Audubon.org](https://www.audubon.org), City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Community Forestry, and the Nebraska Forest Service. For a list of nurseries and landscapers in the Lincoln area which sell and/or promote native and adapted trees, see the Take Action page on the Faith to Forest webpages.

Remember our goal is to grow trees, not just plant them. Consider whether you can care for a tree through a potentially hot, dry summer. Many experts recommend planting in the fall for this reason. Planting in October would be a great way to stretch out the Arbor Day celebration!

Second, make a donation to plant trees. The Lincoln Parks Foundation has established a new fund to plant trees in parks and on other city property; or if your interests are in planting trees in areas around the world where trees can do the most to mitigate climate change, consider One Tree Planted.



River Birch

Faith to Forest is taking a pause for a few months but is hoping to add more events for fall. Any faith community is welcome to participate, and individuals are welcome regardless of faith affiliation. In addition to viewing our webpages, follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FaithToForest>.

You'll find more information and links about buying trees and making donations at <https://www.firstplymouth.org/cattakeaction>. If you missed Justin Evertson's excellent overview on trees or Sarah Browning, Bob Henrickson, and Kaylyn Nerverve discussing tree planting and care, the recordings are available at <https://www.firstplymouth.org/catzoom>.



Black Oak



## Nearly Half of Bald Eagles Tested Across U.S. Show Signs of Chronic Lead Exposure

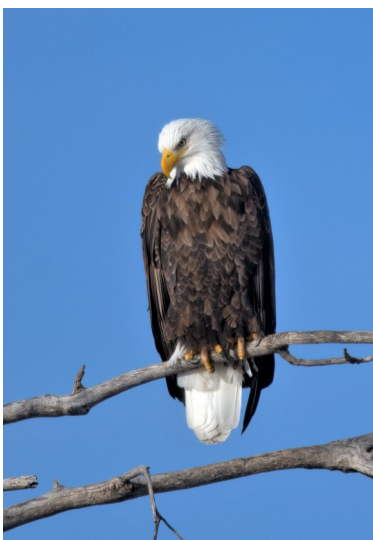
America's national bird is more beleaguered than previously believed, with nearly half of bald eagles tested across the U.S. showing signs of chronic lead exposure, according to a study published by the *Associated Press* on February 17, 2022.

While the bald eagle population has rebounded from the brink of extinction since the U.S. banned the pesticide DDT in 1972, harmful levels of toxic lead were found in the bones of 46 percent of bald eagles sampled in 38 states from California to Florida, researchers reported in the journal *Science*.

Similar rates of lead exposure were found in golden eagles, which scientists say means the raptors probably consumed carrion or prey contaminated by lead from ammunition or fishing tackle.

The blood, bones, feathers, and liver tissue of 1,210 eagles sampled from 2010 to 2018 were examined to assess chronic and acute lead exposure. "This is the first time for any wildlife species that we've been able to evaluate lead exposure and population level consequences at a continental scale," said study co-author Todd Katzner, a wildlife biologist at the U.S. Geological Survey in Boise, Idaho. "It's sort of stunning that nearly 50 percent of them are getting repeatedly exposed to lead." Lead is a neurotoxin that even in low doses impairs an eagle's balance and stamina, reducing its ability to fly, hunt, and reproduce. In high doses, lead causes seizures, breathing difficulty, and death.

The study estimated that lead exposure reduced the annual population growth of bald eagles by four percent and golden eagles by one percent.



Bald eagles are one of America's most celebrated conservation success stories, and the birds were removed from the U.S. Endangered Species List in 2007. But scientists say high lead levels are still a concern. Besides suppressing eagle population growth, lead exposure reduces their resilience in facing future challenges, such as climate change or infectious diseases.

"When we talk about recovery, it's not really the

end of the story—there are still threats to bald eagles," said Krysten Schuler, a wildlife disease ecologist at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine, who was not

involved in the study. Previous studies have shown high lead exposure in specific regions, but not across the country.

The blood samples from live eagles in the new study were taken from birds trapped and studied for other reasons; the bone, feather, and liver samples came from eagles killed by collisions with vehicles or power lines, or other misfortunes.



"Lead is present on the landscape and available to these birds more than we previously thought," said co-author Vince Slabe, a research wildlife biologist at the nonprofit Conservation Science Global. "A lead fragment the size of the end of a pin is large enough to cause mortality in an eagle."

The researchers also found elevated levels of lead exposure in fall and winter, coinciding with hunting season in many states. During these months, eagles scavenge on carcasses and gut piles left by hunters, which are often riddled with shards of lead shot or bullet fragments. Slabe said the upshot of the research was not to disparage hunters. "Hunters are one of the best conservation groups in this country," he said, noting that fees and taxes paid by hunters help fund state wildlife agencies, and that he also hunted deer and elk in Montana. However, Slabe hopes the findings provide an opportunity to "talk to hunters about this issue in a clear manner" and that more hunters will voluntarily switch to non-lead ammunition such as copper bullets.

Lead ammunition for waterfowl hunting was banned in 1991 due to concerns about contamination of waterways, and wildlife authorities encouraged the use of non-toxic steel shot; however, lead ammunition is still common for upland bird hunting and big game hunting.

At the University of Minnesota's Raptor Center, veterinarian and Executive Director Victoria Hall said that "85 to 90 percent of the eagles coming into our hospital have some level of lead in their blood," and X-rays often show fragments of lead bullets in their stomachs. Eagles with relatively low levels can be treated, she said, but those with high exposure can't be saved.

Laura Hale, board president at nonprofit Badger Run Wildlife Rehab in Klamath County, Oregon, said she'll never forget the first eagle she encountered with acute lead poisoning in 2018. She had answered a resident's call about an eagle that seemed immobile in underbrush and brought it to the clinic. The young bald eagle was wrapped in a blanket, unable to breathe properly, let alone stand or fly. "There is something hideous when you watch an eagle struggling to breathe because of lead poisoning—it's really, really harsh," she said, her voice shaking. That eagle went into convulsions and died within 48 hours.

## Mammoth in Lincoln and Evil Actions

by Mark Brohman

A recent article in the Lincoln *Journal Star* reported on a story in a local newspaper about a house on the northwest corner of 15th and U streets that had been built on a mammoth skeleton. It was discovered by workers installing a new furnace in the basement, and they needed to dig additional space for installation. But a shocking footnote contained in the 1909 story explained that “A professor of zoology, no longer at the University of Nebraska, used to tell of a personal friend, a wealthy collector, who carried a tiny hammer with a short handle with which to knock off fingers and toes of famous statues when he traveled in Europe. He was in the habit of bragging to his friends when showing his unique collection.”

Even though this story was 113 years ago, I was furious to think that a Lincolnite would do such evil around the world. I myself recalled viewing several statues when I toured museums, cathedrals, and castles in Europe that were missing fingers, toes, and claws or being told those pieces had been replaced through restorations. I now wonder if some of those statues were victims of this evil man?

## Sandhill Cranes Officially Nebraska's State Migratory Bird

(National Audubon's Chapter Leader Update, March 18, 2022)

During a ceremony at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary on March 16, Governor Ricketts signed a proclamation designating the sandhill crane as the official Migratory Bird of Nebraska. Crane season at Rowe Sanctuary is a sign of spring that many nature lovers look forward to seeing every year. According to a nearby sign (see page 8), 625,900 sandhill cranes have gathered in Nebraska's Platte River Valley this year on their way north to their nesting grounds. You can watch the cranes online on the live cam at [explore.org/livecams/national-audubon-society/crane-camera](https://explore.org/livecams/national-audubon-society/crane-camera). The best viewing times are sunrise and sunset. Take some time to enjoy the beauty of birds as a form of self-care and celebrate Nebraska's new official State Migratory Bird.

## Spring 2022 Birdseed Sale Report

by Cathy Shaner

Thanks to Dennis King, Dwayne Wilson, Mark Brohman, and Dave Barnhouse for helping Lana Novak and Cathy Shaner unload, sort, and load seed into customers' vehicles during the March 18-19 birdseed sale. Elizabeth and Daniel Nelson again provided their garages for the easy transfer of 20- and 50-pound bags of birdseed. I want to give a shout out to Nancy Hamer, Linda Sullivan, and Roxanne Smith for their assistance with the website and emails. Thanks to all! Before expenses a total of \$4,390.50 of seed was sold which included 122 bags and four cases of suet. After expenses, including sales tax and fees, we netted just over \$838. Every bit helps the cause—and the birds are especially grateful!!

## Upcoming Programs at SCPAC

### Discovery Leader Training

Monday, April 18, 12:30-3:00 p.m.

Join us for a free (and fun) training session on becoming a volunteer discovery leader to guide small groups of school and daycare children to the prairie, woodland, and pond habitats where they encourage exploration, model good observational skills, and ask guided questions. No experience is needed.

### Third Tuesday Bird Outing

Tuesday, April 19, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Our popular Third Tuesday Bird Outings return for a new year. Join a knowledgeable bird guide on an outing around the accessible trails. Meet fellow birders and learn the birds of the prairie. Free admission! We ask for online registration so we know who and how many are coming and can email any updated COVID-19 or weather cancellation information. Binoculars will be available. Watch our website for the latest on mask requirements.

### Super Bird Sunday

Sunday, May 1, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

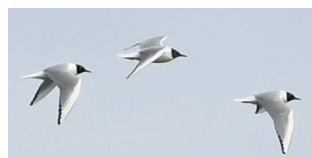
Celebrate the beginning of Bird Month in Nebraska. We'll have bird watching outings and bird games and crafts for all ages.

More information on these and other programs can be found on our website at <https://springcreek.audubon.org/events>; questions to 402-797-2301 or [scp@audubon.org](mailto:scp@audubon.org).

## April Field Trip to Marsh Wren Community Wetlands

by Todd Paddock

One hundred seven bird species were reported on eBird at Marsh Wren in April of 2021. Hopes are high for a good turnout of birds and nice weather to enjoy them at our outing on **Sunday, April 24**. Plan to meet at **9:00 a.m.** at Marsh Wren Community Wetlands parking lot (about 1/2 mile south of Arbor Road on 40th Street, then 1/4 mile east at the intersection by the house.)



**Bonaparte's Gull**

4/15/2021

Bring binoculars if you have them, a face mask for COVID-19 protection, and dress for the weather. There is no fee, and the public is welcome as long as you're fully vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19 (those under five-years-old are exempt from this requirement). Call Todd at 507-458-9416 if you have questions.

# Climate Change Update

by Marilyn McNabb

"A Borrowed Planet—Inherited from our ancestors, on loan from our children." That is the title of the artwork on the cover of the 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Check out this site: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>. If you haven't had quite enough time to read the 3,675-page report, look at the excellent summary by Lauren Leffler on the National Audubon website at <https://www.audubon.org/news/the-planet-undergoing-ecological-transformation-imperiling-biodiversity>.

Leffler writes: "The report is the latest in a string of increasingly urgent and dire reports from the United Nations climate group. Compared to previous IPCC publications, this one is 'less optimistic, more specific, and more certain,' says ornithologist Morgan Tingley, a conservation biologist. . ."

The report was written by 270 experts from 67 countries convened by the U.N. and approved by 195 governments.

The "Summary for Policymakers" (SPM) says in many different ways that timing is everything. "Climate change has caused substantial damages and increasingly irreversible losses, in terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal and open ocean marine ecosystems (high confidence) . . . other impacts are approaching irreversibility, such as . . . changes in . . . Arctic ecosystems driven by permafrost thaw (high confidence)." Also, "in Amazonia . . . cascading impacts from climatic (e.g., heat) and non-climatic stressors (e.g., land use change) will result in irreversible and severe losses of ecosystem services and biodiversity at 2 degrees C. global warming level and beyond (medium confidence) (SPM-B.5.2).

A study released a week later drew more severe conclusions about the rainforest. Published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, it said that more than half the rainforest could be converted into savanna in a matter of decades, dramatically accelerating climate change, turning a large climate sink into carbon releases that would put the goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C. out of reach. Human-caused warming and deforestation push this area toward a tipping point, meaning the system that may abruptly switch from one phase to another—in this case, from carbon sink to massive carbon emissions ("Drying Amazon rainforest closer to 'tipping point,' scientists warn," *Thomson Reuters Foundation Newsletter*, March 7, 2022).

The chief author of the Amazon rainforest study was quoted in the *Washington Post* ("Satellite images show the Amazon Rainforest is hurtling towards a tipping point," March 7, 2022) giving an explanation of how to think about a problem for which "the moment of no return might not be obvious until it's too late to do something." The author proposes an image "of Wile E. Coyote running off a cliff . . . He looks fine, and he suddenly looks down and realizes he's gone over the cliff."

Lauren Leffler writes that the IPCC report underscores that human well-being and survival are inextricably linked with the fate of ecosystems, spurring action to conserve wildlife and habitats. Adequately addressing climate change requires an immediate global effort to prevent the worst consequences. "Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all," reads the final line of the report summary.

## Avian Flu

by Mark Brohman

At the writing of this article, avian flu is all over the news. Nebraska confirmed its first case in a commercial flock of chickens in late March. That flock of 570,000 broiler chickens in Butler County will be destroyed. Earlier the bird flu was found in several wild geese, including one from Holmes Lake in Lincoln and a mixed backyard flock in Merrick County. A 6.2-mile control zone was established around the Butler County facility. A second commercial flock of 400,000 broiler chickens was discovered in Butler County within that zone.

As of last month, bird flu had infected nearly 15 million birds in the U.S., the worst outbreak since 2015. That outbreak seven years ago led to nearly five million laying hens being euthanized at six farms in Dixon County. Nationwide, more than 50 million birds were destroyed in the worst outbreak on record.

Both the Lincoln Children's Zoo and Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo have closed their aviaries and taken their birds off display. I witnessed several children recently telling parents how sad they were that they could not see the penguins swimming in their exhibit in Lincoln.

The Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge (formerly known as Squaw Creek) has closed its auto tour. Their website noted:

### Loess Bluffs Auto Tour CLOSED

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been detected in dead birds found at Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge. We are continuing to see increases in sick and dead birds as the spring migration continues. To ensure the safety for our visitors, volunteers, and staff, the refuge auto tour will be closed until further notice. This event is evolving, and we will continue to post updates on our website as they become available. Please refrain from touching or handling wildlife, especially sick or dead birds. While the CDC considers the current risk to the general public from these HPAI(H5) virus detections in U.S. wild birds and poultry to be low, risk depends on exposure, and people with more exposure may have a greater risk of infection. All strains of HPAI should be treated as potentially transmissible to humans.

From March 1-22, Iowa has seen five cases of bird flu—one in Pottawattamie County, one in Taylor County, one in Warren County, and two in Buena Vista County. There were 5.3 million chickens euthanized in Buena Vista County, to slow the spread. We hope this outbreak comes to an end soon and that impacts to wild and domestic birds will be minimized.

## 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 Ben Sasse**

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://sasse.senate.gov>

### **Senator Deb Fischer**

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

### **1st District Position Vacant at this Time**

### **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 Pete Ricketts**

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

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

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

### **State Capitol Switchboard**

402-471-2311

### **Lancaster County Commissioners**

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

### **Mayor 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: [mayer@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:mayer@lincoln.ne.gov)

### **Lincoln City Council**

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

### **Lincoln Journal Star**

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

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

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ \$25 Individual/Friend
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- \_\_\_ \$100 Northern Cardinal Friend
- \_\_\_ \$250 Western Meadowlark Friend
- \_\_\_ \$500 Bald Eagle Friend
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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.

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Lincoln NE 68506-5643



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The sixth aerial Sandhill Crane Count in the Central Platte River Valley near Wood River, Nebraska, has been recorded!



Check out the link to read the Crane Count blog post from Andrew Caven, Crane Trust Director of Conservation Research: <https://bit.ly/3wq7y64>

## Wachiska Audubon Society

**4547 Calvert St Ste 10**

**Lincoln NE 68506-5643**

402-486-4846

[office@WachiskaAudubon.org](mailto:office@WachiskaAudubon.org)

[www.WachiskaAudubon.org](http://www.WachiskaAudubon.org)

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

## WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2022

Executive Director ..... Mark Brohman

Office Administrator ..... Arlys Reitan

### OFFICERS

President ..... \*Theresa Pella

Vice President..... \*Marilyn McNabb

Recording Secretary ..... \*Linda Plock

Treasurer ..... \*Dylan Aufdenkamp

Past President..... \*Stu Luttich

### STANDING COMMITTEES/POSITIONS

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Director at Large..... \*Bruce Kennedy

Director at Large..... \*Kris Powers

Conservation ..... \*Ross Scott

Education..... \*Tim Knott

Field Trips ..... vacant

\*Lana Novak

Hospitality ..... Cheryl Moncure

Legislation..... \*vacant

Membership ..... \*Linda R. Brown

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Newsletter Editor ..... Arlys Reitan

Population/Environment..... Mary King

\*vacant

Publicity/Public Relations..... Arlys Reitan

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Executive Director Audubon Nebraska.. \*Kristal Stoner

**\*Denotes voting Board member**

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



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***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**.

