



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

SEPTEMBER 2024

Volume 33 - Issue 9

Wachiska Program and General Meeting — Thursday, September 12, 7:00 p.m., Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, and also via YouTube link: <https://youtube.com/live/AwHnY5ibySo?feature=share>

Feathers or Scales: Why Birds Are Just Fancy Reptiles in Disguise

by Monica Macoubrie, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Wildlife Education Specialist, Nebraska Project WILD State Coordinator

Ever wondered why birds seem to have a bit of a reptilian flair? Join us for an insightful exploration into the fascinating evolutionary link between birds and their scaly predecessors. Unveil the surprising truth that beneath those vibrant feathers lie ancient reptilian roots. From their shared origins to their parallel adaptations for survival, discover how birds are essentially nature's elegant disguise of our cold-blooded friends. This presentation promises to unravel the quirky similarities and evolutionary twists that make birds not just creatures of flight but also, quite literally, fancy reptiles in disguise.



worked for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in the education division. She has a deep passion for reptiles and amphibians and loves cupcakes, books, and coffee.

Join Wachiska on **Thursday, September 12, at 7:00 p.m.** at Lincoln's Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, to learn more about reptiles and amphibians. This free, public, in-person talk will also be live-streamed on YouTube at

<https://youtube.com/live/AwHnY5ibySo?feature=share>

No registration is needed. This program can also be viewed at a later time. Check Wachiska's website for links to past programs.

Climate Signs Still Available from Wachiska Audubon

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



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

Calendar

September

- 3 Education Committee via Zoom, 6:00 p.m.
- 9 Conservation Committee via Zoom, 6:30 p.m.
- 12 General Meeting, "Feathers or Scales: Why Birds are Just Fancy Reptiles in Disguise," by Monica Macoubrie, NGPC, 7:00 p.m. in-person at Unitarian Church and also live-streamed; no registration needed (see link above)
- 15 Newsletter deadline, Wachiska office, 5:00 p.m.
- 17 Board Meeting via Zoom, 7:00 p.m.

Executive Director's Message

by Mark Brohman



The summer has flown by, and schools are already back in session. I hope you were able to get out and enjoy nature and maybe see a few birds. I was fortunate to get to drive down my favorite stretch of highway in Nebraska a few weeks ago. I traveled down Highway 2 from Grand Island to Alliance. I especially love the stretch from Whitman to Antioch. The roadside

wetlands and ponds are amazing. It is a good thing the traffic was light, as I found myself scanning the landscape for some of my favorite birds.

On this trip there were lots of shorebirds and ducks. Topping the list for me were American avocets, Wilson's phalarope, black-necked stilts, American white pelicans, and tundra swans. On one lake there were dozens of pelicans forming a huge white island that looked like an iceberg. I would have loved to stop to zoom in on our feathered friends, but there were so many ponds, and I was in a hurry to reach Chadron for a meeting. On my return trip, I detoured south to Lake McConaughy and stopped by the Cedar Point Biological Station (see my story on page 5). Dr. Allison Johnson led a short walking tour through the cedar-covered canyon along the campus. We saw and heard several birds as we walked through the canyon, including house wrens, vireos, grosbeaks, flycatchers, and American goldfinches. It was an overcast morning with a light drizzle, so the birds were hunkering pretty tight. Lake Ogallala beside the campus had a huge flock of black terns and pelicans. As I left Cedar Point, I was able to see a belted kingfisher along with several bald eagles hanging out by the outlet of Lake McConaughy.

You may have heard that Wachiska has been offered Prairie Pines by the University of Nebraska Foundation, which received the 145-acre property just northeast of Lincoln at 112th and Adams streets from Professor Walt Bagley a number of years ago. Walt was one of Wachiska's charter members. Prairie Pines contains a 10-acre native prairie, a 15-acre diverse created prairie, and several small tracts that are currently brome stands that could be reseeded. There are several on-site tree experiments operated by the Nebraska Forest Service and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. Walt planted the arboretum. Community Crops also has a five-acre garden space. Prairie Pines Partners is a nonprofit that currently operates educational programs and ensures that Walt's wishes to forever protect Prairie Pines are carried out. There are many components to this decision, and we will continue to do our due diligence. Feel free to contact me if you have questions or have any special input. We will update the membership as we move forward with a decision.

I have been talking to Alter Scrap Recycling, 6100 North 70th Street, in Lincoln. They are willing to set up an account so that anyone can donate their scrap metal to Wachiska. When people take their aluminum cans, copper wire, appliances, and other metals to Alter, the proceeds can be donated to Wachiska. I will have more information in the next *Babbling Brook* but, in the meantime, start collecting your cans, wire, and other metals.

Board Nominations Open for 2025 Term

by Theresa Pella, President

This is a reminder that nominations for the 2025 Board are being accepted until September 30. The nominating committee consisting of Lisa Sutton, Carol Hinkle, and Theresa Pella will then prepare a recommended list of candidates for the Board in October. There are two officer positions, President and Vice President, and four director-at-large positions to be considered. The term for all positions is two years, beginning January 1, 2025. Eligible candidates must be a National Audubon Society member or Wachiska Friend (or both). An important side note is that if a candidate is nominated by others, it is with the candidate's consent.

For the past couple of cycles, the Board identified areas of expertise that could help strengthen the body to be individuals with access/knowledge to financial resources and management. Please submit names to either Theresa (pella_t@yahoo.com) or Executive Director Mark Brohman (mark.brohman@wachiskaaudubon.org).

It's Fall 2024 Birdseed Sale Time Live On-line and Mail-in Orders

by Cathy Shaner, Birdseed Sale Coordinator

Plan to order your fall birdseed from Wachiska by October 3. Pages 3-4 contain the order form. Check Wachiska's website at <https://www.wachiskaaudubon.org> which provides the ordering information, order form, seed descriptions, mailing deadline, and pick up dates. This is a major fundraiser begun 36 years ago to provide nourishment for our feathered friends. On-line orders are live September 1 and continue through September 30. Printed mail-in orders must be postmarked by October 3.

Pick up dates are Friday and Saturday, October 11-12. If you can help on these dates, please contact Jeff Meyer at 402-483-2757 or the Wachiska office at 402-486-4846.

The pick up location is the same as it was last spring at the Wachiska office, 4547 Calvert Street. Signs will be posted.

Center for Grasslands Studies Fall Seminars

Seminars will be live-streamed on Mondays, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. through December 2 at <https://unl.zoom.us/j/91274348434>. Details on weekly topics and presenters can be found at <https://grassland.unl.edu/> or email grassland@unl.edu.



Wachiska Audubon Fall 2024 Birdseed Sale Order Form

	Bag Size	Bag Code	Price Each	Quantity	Total Cost
ALL PRICES INCLUDE SALES TAX					
FEED MIXES	Standard Audubon Mix	40 lb bag	ST40	\$ 45.00	\$
	Classic Audubon Mix	20 lb bag	CL20	\$ 31.00	\$
		40 lb bag	CL40	\$ 50.00	\$
	Attraction Audubon Mix	35 lb bag	AT35	\$ 67.00	\$
	Woodpecker Gourmet	20 lb bag	WO20	\$ 59.00	\$
	Bushy Tail Treat	20 lb bag	BT20	\$ 40.00	\$
SEEDS	Millet, White (98%)	50 lb bag	MI50	\$ 44.00	\$
	Peanuts, shelled rejects	20 lb bag	PR20	\$ 55.00	\$
	Safflower Seed	20 lb bag	SA20	\$ 42.00	\$
		50 lb bag	SA50	\$ 92.00	\$
	Safflower Seed, Nutra Saff	20 lb bag		\$ 42.00	\$
	Sunflower Hearts, coarse	20 lb bag	HC20	\$ 57.00	\$
		50 lb bag	HC50	\$ 110.00	\$
	Sunflower Hearts, fine	20 lb bag	HF20	\$ 57.00	\$
Sunflower Seed, black oil	25 lb bag	SB25	\$ 28.00	\$	
SUET CAKES	High Energy Treat, 11.75 oz. cake		EN-C	\$ 2.00	\$
	Berry Treat, 11 oz. cake		BT-C	\$ 2.00	\$
Total number of bags and cost (All prices INCLUDE sales tax)					\$
Tax Deductible Donation to support Wachiska's education & conservation activities					\$
Total Enclosed. Make check payable to Wachiska Audubon Society					\$

Name (Print) _____ Email address _____ Phone Number (required) _____

Mailing Address _____

This form and your check must be postmarked by Thursday, October 3, 2024
 Mail to: Wachiska Audubon Society Birdseed Sale - 4547 Calvert St, Suite 10,
 Lincoln NE 68506-5643

ORDER PICK UP DATES - MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

PLEASE—Plan to pick up your order during one of these times

Friday, October 11

Saturday, October 12

3:00 -6:00 p.m.

9:00 -11:00 a.m.

Note: stay in car; we will bring the seed to you.

Pick up location: Wachiska Audubon Office, 4547 Calvert Street (garage located south)

Are you interested in volunteering for the birdseed pick up Yes (check box)

Wachiska Audubon Fall 2024 Birdseed Sale & Fundraiser

Wachiska's Birdseed Sales are an important part of our fundraising and offer you a great deal on birdseed! *Our prices are very competitive.* The great majority of Wachiska's budget for education and conservation programs comes from donations and fundraising, and our twice-a-year birdseed sales are two of our major fundraisers. If you feed birds regularly, or want to give it a try, please buy from Wachiska. We depend on your purchases, and so do our feathered friends! Thank you!

FEED MIXES

Standard Audubon Mix – white millet, sunflower seed, cracked corn, peanuts, oat groats

Classic Audubon Mix – sunflower seed and hearts, white millet, cracked corn, safflower seed, peanuts, oat groats

Attraction Audubon Mix – sunflower seed and hearts, safflower seed, peanuts, raisins, protein pellets

Woodpecker Gourmet – 75% nuts (almonds, peanuts, walnuts), pumpkin seed, corn, black oil sunflower seed and hearts, safflower seed

Bushy Tail Treat – peanuts, sunflower seed, whole corn, raisins, pumpkin seed, feed pellets. Treat your favorite backyard squirrels and keep them away from the bird feeders!

SUET CAKES

High Energy Treat – sunflower seeds, millet, cracked corn; enjoyed by most wild birds

NEW! Berry Treat – a wonderful winter treat

SEEDS

White Millet (98%) – popular with cardinals, mourning doves, house finches, juncos, sparrows

Peanuts (shelled) – attractive for woodpeckers and blue jays

Safflower Seed – good for house finches, chickadees, cardinals, woodpeckers – NOT FAVORED by squirrels and grackles.

Nutra Saff Seed is without the hard, outer shell.

Sunflower Hearts – highly prized by birds and leave less mess—use coarse hearts for feeders with large openings that might allow fine hearts to drop out

Black Oil Sunflower Seed – favored by most seed-eating birds; high oil content for more energy

Additional copies of this flyer and the order form are available on our website:

www.WachiskaAudubon.org.

ORDER PICK UP DATES - MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

Location for
pick up:
Wachiska Audubon
Office, 4547 Calvert
Street, Lincoln.

Look for Signs

Reminder: stay in your car; we will bring the seed to you.

Friday, October 11
3:00 -6:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 12
9:00-11:00 a.m.

PLEASE—Plan to pick up your order during one of these times. Orders that are not picked up cause a lot of extra work for our volunteers whose help we greatly appreciate! If it is totally impossible for you to pick up your seed, please email Arlys at office@wachiskaaudubon.org to make alternate pick up arrangements.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to assist, please contact Jeffrey Meyer, 402/483-2757.

Cedar Point Celebrates 50th

by Mark Brohman

The University of Nebraska's Cedar Point Biological Field Station turned 50 this year with a big celebration at the camp August 16-19. People from all over the country came back for hikes, canoeing, bird walks, and insect and plant collecting. Cedar Point is located on the shores of Lake Keystone, just below Lake McConaughy, north of Ogallala. In 1974, UNL learned the site was available, and the next year they leased the 38-acre former Girl Scout Camp and eventually the land was purchased and easements granted.

I attended the 50th anniversary and got to see Dr. John and Karen Janovy who oversaw the camp for many years, including the summers I was there. The current operators, Dr. Jon Garbish and John DeLong were there, plus several faculty and some alumni including Bill Whitney and Sarah Bailey from the Prairie Plains Resource Institute, Dr. Allison Johnson (an understudy of Dr. Paul Johnsgard), and Dr. Mike Kaspari, a professor at the University of Oklahoma who was Dr. Johnsgard's assistant the summer I took ornithology under Dr. Johnsgard. Cedar Point now offers writing and art retreats, architectural and engineering student opportunities, along with the traditional biological classes.

I spent two summers at Cedar Point as a young biology major attending Chadron State College (CSC). The ornithology professor at CSC recommended that if I was thinking about attending graduate school, I should consider taking ornithology from the world-renowned Dr. Paul Johnsgard. Dr. Lawson said ornithology was his hobby, and I should take it from a professional. I took his advice and that was my first summer at Cedar Point.

I have three Dr. Johnsgard stories from that summer of 1983. Dr. Johnsgard was known for having some crazy tricks in his labs. That summer on one of the lab quizzes he had a male house sparrow. It turned out that I was the only student out of two dozen who correctly identified the specimen. I remember him saying, "don't always assume something from a quick view." Growing up on a ranch, I had dispatched many house sparrows as a kid, and I could see the dark markings on the head, even though it was dyed a dark purple.

My second story occurred one evening while I was helping in the mess hall. Dr. Johnsgard entered the dining hall and sat down in the lounge area. I noticed him and I had my course book for his ornithology class with me. I asked him if he would sign it for me. He hesitated and said the textbook was not his, but a compilation of several authors. I said that was okay and handed him the soft-bound book. I told him he could put the book on the table, and I would grab it after supper. I glanced several times over the next 15 to 20 minutes and Dr. Johnsgard was still writing in my book. After about 20 minutes, I decided to wander by and retrieve the book. He looked up and said, "someday when I'm gone you can sell this and it will pay back

your tuition for this course." I looked down and he had ink drawn a beautiful female Wilson's phalarope. I was flabbergasted.

The third story happened later that summer after taking ornithology. I had signed up with Club Europa, an organization specializing in trips of various lengths with college students across Europe. I had always wanted to see Europe and decided after attending one of their presentations on campus at CSC, I was going to go on one of their trips. After consulting with my grandfather, he encouraged me to go for the gusto. He said he had always wanted to "cross the big pond," but never had the opportunity. He said he would help subsidize my trip and that I should take the longest trip they offered, 52 days and 19 countries. Well, I couldn't disappoint my grandfather! So, I think it was day three or four and I was walking through the London Zoo and guess who I spotted? Crouched down with a camera with a giant lens in front of an exotic pheasant cage was none other than Dr. Johnsgard. I said hello and he recognized me immediately and called me by name. He was writing a book on pheasants of the world and was there taking photos. I am halfway around the world, and I run into a professor I had just finished a class with two weeks earlier!

After graduating from CSC two years later, I came to UNL to pursue a master's degree in forestry, fisheries and wildlife, and I would see Dr. Johnsgard from time to time. He always said "hi" and exchanged pleasantries with me. We also had many encounters at Wachiska events over the years, and he was very excited when I was hired to be the first executive director. I surely miss Dr. Johnsgard, as I know many of you also miss him.

My second summer was much less eventful at Cedar Point. I took vertebrate zoology under Dr. Giles. I did come home with a six-foot boa constrictor though. Eleanor was one of my favorite pets. Dr. Giles had raised her since she was six inches long; however, his current girlfriend had warned him, it was her or his snake, but that will have to be a story for another time.



John DeLong addresses Cedar Point reunion at the field station

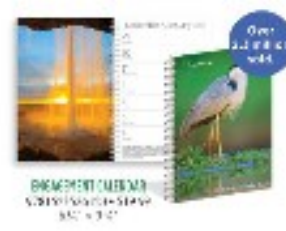
2025 Audubon Calendar Collection



1 - \$18



2 - \$24



3 - \$20



4 - \$18



5 - \$18



6 - \$18



7 - \$11



8 - \$11



9 - \$11

Immerse yourself in the beauty of the natural world with the 2025 Audubon Calendar Collection! Experience vibrant, full-color photographs for each day, week or month paired with insightful text from nature experts. Every purchase supports the Wachiska Audubon Society's vital mission to protect birds and the places they need.

Note: Ordering deadline for 2025 calendars is October 4, 2024.

Pricing: All prices include tax and shipping.

NO EXTRA CALENDARS WILL BE AVAILABLE, so place your orders now.

Check the Wachiska website to view these beautiful calendars in color at: www.wachiskaaudubon.org.

Call or email the Wachiska office by October 4 to order. Phone 402-486-4846 or email office@wachiskaaudubon.org.

All orders will come to the Wachiska office for pick up in mid-November.

You will be notified via email or phone. Payment will be due when calendars are picked up.

Thank you very much for your support in this fundraiser for Wachiska Audubon.

Public Officials

President Joe Biden

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

Senator Deb Fischer

1248 O St Ste 1111, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-441-4600 Fax: 402-476-8753
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-6551 Fax: 202-228-0012
E-mail at website: <http://fischer.senate.gov>

Senator Pete Ricketts

1248 O St Ste 1000, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-476-1400 Fax: 402-476-0605
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-4224 Fax: 202-224-5213
E-mail at website: <http://ricketts.senate.gov>

Congressman Mike Flood (1st District)

301 S 13th St Ste 100, Lincoln NE 68508
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.

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



The Babbling Brook is printed on recycled and recyclable paper.

REMEMBERING WACHISKA'S HISTORY

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

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

Wachiska Audubon Society

4547 Calvert St Ste 10

Lincoln NE 68506-5643

402-486-4846

office@WachiskaAudubon.org

www.WachiskaAudubon.org

WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2024

Executive DirectorMark Brohman
Office AdministratorArlys Reitan

OFFICERS

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

STANDING COMMITTEES/POSITIONS

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

*Denotes voting Board member

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

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 each paycheck, and your contributions can add up. Your donations through Give Nebraska are tax deductible. Check with your employer to see if they are part of Give Nebraska.

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

Mission Statement of the Wachiska Audubon Society

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

A Gift to the Future

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

