



IAIN NICOLSON Audubon CENTER AT ROWE SANCTUARY

Crane River CHRONICLES

SUMMER 2015



ROWE HAPPENINGS/NEWS

Bird Spotlight - Bobolinks - by Kent Skaggs

Most people know that Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary manages habitat for migrating Sandhill Cranes, but did you know that that we manage for grassland nesting species as well? Rowe Sanctuary owns 2,416 acres, approximately half of which reside in grass. This attracts species such as Dickcissels, Western Meadowlarks, Northern Bobwhite, Grasshopper Sparrows, Upland Sandpipers and Bobolinks.

During the breeding season, male Bobolinks are among the more showy birds that can be found on the sanctuary. With black underparts, a white back and a buffy patch of feathers on the back of the head, the male visually stands out. But even more distinctive is the song that is sung typically while flying over the prairie. Females are a buffy brown, which allows them to blend into their surroundings while on the nest which is located on the ground.

Bobolinks breed in open areas and prefer a mixture of grasses and broadleaf plants like legumes. Several areas on Rowe Sanctuary meet these requirements and consistently host Bobolinks year after year. Management practices such as haying do not occur until after July 15 to permit grassland nesting species time to fledge their young. Grazing is timed to occur primarily outside of the breeding season.

By mid-summer, the male Bobolink is losing his showy colors and will look similar to the female and young of the year. Late summer Bobolinks will group together in large flocks as they move south for the winter. With the birds being rather non-descript at this time, they are often passed off as being blackbirds, which they are related. To find out more about Bobolinks, visit www.audubon.org/fieldguide.



Calendar of Events
p.2

Celebration 2015
p.3

Habitat
p.4

Volunteerism
p.7

Specific management recommendations for Bobolinks in the Midwest:

1. Regardless of geographic location, avoid disturbing (e.g. haying, burning, moderately or heavily grazing) nesting habitat during the breeding season, approximately early May to mid-July. Treatments can be done in early spring (several weeks prior to the arrival of adults on the breeding grounds) or in the fall after the breeding season.
2. Delay treatments until late July or August to protect fledglings and late-nesting females.
3. Create large habitat patches (>10-30 ha) and minimize woody edges whenever possible to decrease Brown-headed Cowbird brood parasitism.

4. Use a rotating treatment schedule on several nearby prairie fragments to make a variety of successional stages available. Adjacent patches of alternative habitat provide refuge for fledglings to escape from mowed areas and for late-nesting females.

5. Create or maintain patches of relatively sparse, grass-dominated vegetation resembling old (>8 years since planted) hayfield. Scattered forbs should be encouraged for nest-site cover.

6. Burn large areas (>80ha) using a rotational system. Subunits of >30ha in area, or about 20-30% of the total area, should be treated in a year.

2015 Sandhill Crane Migration



ROWE HAPPENINGS CONTINUED

The Land Beneath Our Feet

*Despite his artistic pretensions,
His sophistication and,
Many accomplishments,
Man owes his existence
To a six inch layer of topsoil
And the fact that it rains
Anonymous*

It is the land beneath our feet that sustains us all and binds us together. Through your help, Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary works year round to provide healthy habitat for the cranes, other birds and animals as well as the people that rely on the Platte River. It is an intricate and interconnected web that sustains so many different types of species. From the tiniest microorganism, insects, plants, animals, and people, the connection runs through everything so all can thrive.

We continue the thread of this connection to the people and the children in our volunteer and education programs. It is the personal experiences in nature that we provide to all of our program participants that will help sustain our world into the future.

This connection to the land and the environment here on Rowe Sanctuary creates the awareness that good habitats for animals also sustain people.

Rowe Sanctuary's influence also extends well beyond the borders of the land we own. The entire Platte River ecosystem from Colorado and Wyoming all the way to the mouth is interconnected. To ignore any part of it would be a failure. Today our partnerships encompass all stakeholders on the Platte River and through these associations we are finding cooperative sustainable solutions to many of the issues facing the river.

The next time it rains take a moment to grab your children or a friend and splash in the mud or take a moment to celebrate a new plant pushing through the earth. Thank you for all you do to help sustain this river, the cranes and the land beneath our feet.



Bill Jabbick

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Firefly Picnic

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 7:30 P.M.

(program begins at 8:00 p.m.)

Bring your own snack picnic and watch the sunset on the Platte River. Then spend a relaxing evening learning about fireflies and other insects. For more information call (308) 468-5282 or email Keanna Leonard: Kleonard@audubon.org

For more information on upcoming Rowe Adventures, call (308) 468-5282 or email Keanna Leonard: Kleonard@audubon.org

A River Runs Through It

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 5:00 P.M.

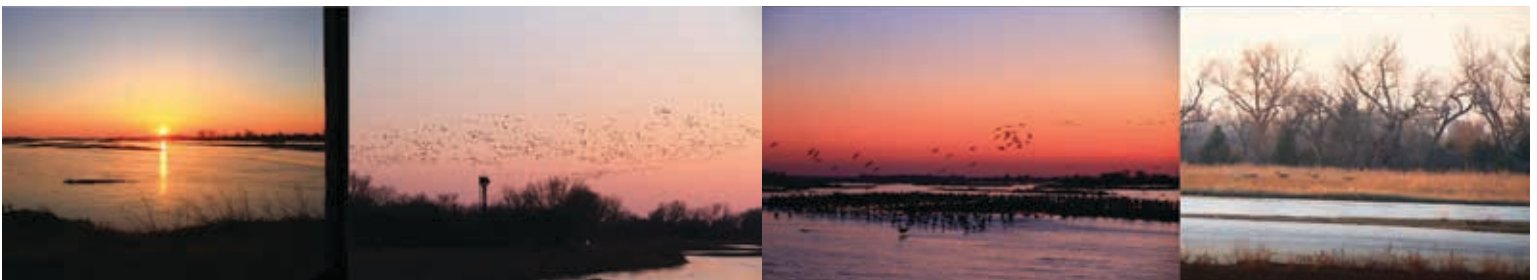
Join us for an evening of Drinks, Dinner, Fellowship celebrating the conservation efforts of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center and Rowe Sanctuary.

For more information call (308) 468-5282

CELEBRATION 2015

One word describes the evening enjoyed by the 80 attendees at Celebration – AMAZING! The day began with rain, then sleet, and finally snow. At 4:00 pm, the sun appeared and promised a wonderful evening celebrating the conclusion of the 2015 Sandhill Crane migration. Before going out to the blinds, attendees enjoyed hors d'oeuvres catered by Chef Michael Park with Mirepoix Catering. The highlight of the evening was the crane tour. The cranes were so close to the blinds that several guests commented 'I could have reached out and grabbed one.' Once back in the center, guests enjoyed hot coffee and desserts, A perfect conclusion to a magical evening.

Thank you to the hardworking volunteers who made the evening possible – Becky Evers, John Wupper, Darrell Teply, Dudley Friskopp, Jerry and Sharon Ingram, Rolf Hertenstein and Emily Walker, Marvin and Claudia DeJong, Michael Leonard, Anthony Santoyo, Sylvia Marchetti, Rob and Susan Ahlschwede.



LETTER FROM STATE DIRECTOR *Marian Langan*

Returning Upland Sandpipers, a newly finalized strategic plan, fresh green grass coming through a blackened burn, and fundraising goals for a new year – all things to make a director's pulse quicken! Some might not think a few of these would be exciting, but they are for me because they all represent the same thing: possibility.

All of the conservation impact we make is because people see what is possible and they act on it. The current state of politics in our country leaves a lot to be desired, and I hear people say that they don't know why they should bother with trying to change anything. I tell them why they should bother. It is because of the glowing faces of the third-graders from Wilber-Clatonia at Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center today. Because of the Prairie

Chickens seen on the new conservation area purchased last year. Because of all the kids on pins and needles waiting for their adventures on the river at our summer SOAR camps.

Your contributions to this effort make a difference every day. Every dollar donated, every hour volunteered, every person you talk to – it rolls up into real impact for birds and people. And THAT makes a director swoon!



LETTER FROM THE STEWARDSHIP BOARD CHAIR *Becky Evers*

This has been an amazing year to be involved at Rowe Sanctuary. On April 9, the Stewardship Board hosted a Celebration of another wonderful crane season. We weren't so sure, when we were setting up tables and wet snow was falling, but it cleared up and was a perfect evening. Thank you for coming, and if you couldn't make it, you missed a special night.

Adding the newest property and the buildings last June has given us many new opportunities. Thanks to the efforts of an extraordinary building committee, coordinated by project manager Autumn Taddicken, the farm house has been remodeled and expanded to provide more volunteer housing, and has been renamed "The Retreat." The existing volunteer house near the

visitors center has also had some improvements that make it much more comfortable, and has been renamed "The Cottage."

We want to show off these facilities at our gourmet fundraiser "A River Runs Through It" on August 29. So please mark your calendars and get ready for a very wonderful evening. A special setting, a special meal, and very special people will combine for a memorable evening. See you there!



HABITAT

We're all familiar with the amazing spectacle that Rowe Sanctuary hosts each Spring. The "Big Bend" reach of the central Platte River and the more than five miles of channel that Audubon protects is critical to migrating cranes, waterfowl and shorebirds. The Sanctuary also preserves some of the largest tracts of native grassland in an otherwise highly fragmented central Platte River valley. Grassland-nesting birds have shown the most sustained population declines of any bird group in North America. Fittingly, managing Rowe Sanctuary's off-river wet meadow and upland prairie habitats is given equal attention in our Strategic Plan. Grassland and associated species management can be complex and we use a variety of activities to reach our conservation targets. Grazing, haying, prescribed burning, resting, removing trees, and controlling invasive species are all tools that we use to restore or maintain ecological function in our grasslands. A greater diversity of plant species and structures distributed across the landscape helps meet the needs of a greater number of bird species, each having their own niche within the system. To measure our success and adapt our approach to maximize our benefit to target bird species we are implementing a new, volunteer-friendly breeding bird monitoring program. With information collected during the annual surveys we will be able to see just how work on the ground is affecting bird presence, abundance, and even reproductive success.



Anne Winkel is the new Habitat Management Technician at Rowe Sanctuary. Anne grew up on a farm in southeast Nebraska and earned a degree in Bible, Religion and Philosophy with a minor in Women's Studies from Goshen College in northern Indiana. She first took interest in conservation while working on a small farm in Georgia and enjoys always having something new to learn. Anne currently lives in nearby Prosser, NE, with her husband, cat Leroy and beagle Maddie. In her spare time she likes to garden, preserve foods and do embroidery.



This prescribed burn conducted in April by staff and volunteers had several objectives. The late-spring fire will suppress invasive cool-season grasses, invigorate desirable warm-season grasses and provide a growing opportunity for wild flowers and other forbs normally outcompeted for space and resources by the grasses. It will also kill small eastern red cedar trees encroaching into the grassland from a nearby riparian area.



BIG YEAR

Rowe Sanctuary is compiling bird species observations from staff and visitors for the 2015 calendar year. The collective "Big Year" is a concerted effort to record as many species as we can that utilize the Sanctuary and is a fun way to gather valuable information and

engage our visitors. At printing, our list is 170 species and growing. You can enquire about the Big Year with staff or watch for updates on the Facebook and Twitter pages.

EDUCATION/OUTREACH



Tess Bruner

Tess grew up in Shelton, NE and attended Shelton Public schools, graduating in 2010. She became a SOAR Peer Leader in the summer of 2008 and fell in love with the program. She has been helping with SOAR camp ever since, this year taking on the position of SOAR Coordinator. Spending time working with kids at SOAR was one reason she decided to pursue an elementary

education degree at Hastings College. Tess graduated from Hastings College in 2014, and became a substitute elementary teacher for the Hastings Public School district this year. When she is not teaching or coordinating SOAR camp, she enjoys reading, playing the piano, and spending time outside.



Heidi LaClair

Heidi, the new Temporary Education Assistant, grew up in New England, learning about birds and water with her family from the seat of a kayak. She still prefers to spend her time in a kayak, but now she is sharing her love of nature with her own children and with the guests that come to visit Rowe Sanctuary. Heidi is a longtime volunteer at

Rowe, a Nebraska Master Naturalist, and a relay driver for Raptor Recovery.



Habitat and kids - Rowe Sanctuary's educational programs immerse children in the local habitat to explore and conduct investigations while learning the importance of the habitat for the local animals. The kids also are involved in creating habitat. Last year SOAR campers planted two acres of pollinator habitat by spreading seeds, throwing seed balls and planting seedlings.



SITE PLANNING

Audubon launched a Master Site Planning process for Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. This is a very exciting opportunity for our work here on the Platte River in the Central Flyway. The resulting plan will impact our conservation outcomes for years to come.

In December 2014, Audubon issued a Request for Proposals to firms across the country for Master Site Planning Services at Rowe Sanctuary. The search committee chose Studio Outside to facilitate and design our Master Site Plan.

Studio Outside is a landscape architecture practice based in Dallas, Texas. Their team has worked on award-winning projects around the country and bring deep experience with habitat preservation and land stewardship as well as environmental education and visitor services.

As a flagship center in the Audubon system, Iain Nicolson Audubon Center serves as one of Audubon's highest profile sites in the central U.S. Providing a powerful experience for visitors here is important for the future of the Platte River and the cranes. Creating meaningful environmental education experiences for youth and families year-round, while balancing the habitat needs of a Globally Important Bird Area, is critical to our mission.

Seed funding for the Master Site Planning process was provided by a long-time Audubon supporter and board member. Watch future newsletters for more news about the outcomes of this exciting process.

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

Leaving a gift to protect birds and their habitats is easier than most people think, and we can help make it even easier. It is especially quick and simple to name Audubon as a beneficiary of a retirement account, life insurance policy, or other financial account. These gifts:

- Cost you nothing now
- Enable you to change your beneficiaries at any time, for any reason
- Require no minimum contribution



For more information, request our free guide today by contacting Shari Kolding at 512-236-9076 or skolding@audubon.org. You may also download our guides and other information at www.audubon.org/legacy.

Benefits Update

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary supporters have played a key role in taking this vision for the Platte River from a dream to a reality! Beginning July 1, 2015, all supporters who make annual gifts of \$50 or more annually will receive free admission to our other Audubon Center in Nebraska, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center (near Lincoln, Nebraska)

All donors of \$20 and above become members of National Audubon Society and receive the award-winning Audubon magazine. If you do not wish to receive these benefits, please notify us at rowesanctuary@audubon.org

With your support, as a donor, volunteer, advocate, and more, we are able to enrich our community, foster a connection to our natural and cultural history, and share that with more than 15,000 visitors every year. Thank you for your continued support!

Retirement Income You Can Depend On

With all the ups and downs in the financial markets, many of our friends are turning to Audubon's Charitable Gift Annuity program to create a steady, dependable stream of lifetime income. Charitable Gift Annuities offer other benefits too, a good payment rate, income that is partially tax-free, income tax charitable deduction, and, of course, the fact that they are helping a good cause like Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary.

Easy to Do

With a few simple questions, we can prepare a simple gift illustration outlining how your gift can benefit Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary, how much you will receive for the rest of your life, how much of that income will be tax-free, and the amount of your income tax charitable deduction. We will need to know your specific birthdate, the size of gift you want to make, and whether it will be cash or stock.

For Example

Mary Smith is 75 years old and gives \$20,000 to Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary in exchange for a Charitable Gift Annuity. CGA rates are based on age, the payment rate for her age is 5.8%, which means she receives \$1,160 annually, of which \$899 is tax-free. In addition, she receives a charitable tax deduction of \$8,852.

Mary will receive fixed payments for the rest of her life. Because the payments are backed by the full assets of National Audubon Society, her annuity checks will always be there for her.

Annuities can also benefit two people, and are a popular choice for married couples and those wishing to help secure additional income for loved ones.



For more information, contact Melissa Filipi at 402-797-2301, mfilipi@audubon.org, or Shari Kolding at 512-236-9076, skolding@audubon.org.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many ways that you can help us fulfill our mission of conserving the Platte River and the birds that rely on it. Support of all types makes such a difference, with your help we can make the world a better place!

- Become a volunteer. Our volunteers are an important part of our successes. There are many opportunities available that can fit in to any schedule. We're happy to play "matchmaker" and find the perfect volunteer opportunity for your interests, skills, and time!
- Tell your friends and family about us! Raising awareness of our work opens many doors, and introduces a new group of volunteers, donors, and supporters to our mission.
- Donate. We rely on the generous support of our donors for the work that we do. We do not receive funding from any national organization. All money raised here, stays here. You can return a gift in the envelope provided, visit our website to donate online, or stop by our Education Center to make a gift in person.
- Commemorate a life event with a gift in honor or memory of friends, family, or occasions.
- Take a look at our wish list (page 8) for additional gift ideas.
- Become a monthly donor. You can provide regular, ongoing support for our work by visiting our web site, rowe.audubon.org.
- Include us in your estate plans. Several simple, flexible, tax-advantaged options can benefit your heirs and Rowe Sanctuary at the same time.

VOLUNTEERISM

We need YOU!

Rowe Sanctuary's valuable conservation work would not be possible without our dedicated volunteer corps. Are you interested in habitat restoration work? Are you a handyman at heart? Do you like working with the public? Are you organized? If you answered yes to any of these questions, we need you to join the Rowe Sanctuary Volunteer Corps. You can assist Rowe Sanctuary as a groundskeeper, habitat assistant, visitor services assistant, office assistant... endless opportunities to be a part of the valuable conservation work at Rowe Sanctuary.

Call Rowe Sanctuary at (308) 468-5282 and let us know how you want to assist with Rowe Sanctuary's conservation work.



Diana Luscher, Community Outreach Coordinator, has retired and will now go back to the ranks of Rowe Volunteer.

Thank you, Diana!!

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT - ADOPT AN ACRE TODAY!

The Stewardship Board of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary is excited to announce a new program to help support our growing needs. Many people like their support to be given in a way that is more tangible, and the Board worked to meet that need. You can be an integral part of the work that we do, contribute to ongoing habitat management, support our education programs for youth and adults, and help provide a safe refuge for birds and wildlife. We work to preserve this area because of its tremendous value as wildlife habitat and as a site to engage people in volunteerism and in education programs.

Become part of the mission to conserve this important migration route and essential river habitat.

Proper management requires many activities, including clearing of river channels, re-seeding, controlled burns, rotational cattle grazing, invasive tree removal, and more. We have continued to successfully develop a mosaic of habitats that suit the needs of a diversity of wildlife, including Whooping Cranes, Sandhill Cranes, Piping Plovers, and Least Terns. These bird species have specific habitat needs, and are facing great pressure from the loss of this habitat. You are helping to maintain essential river habitat for the

needs of endangered and threatened birds, and at a location easily accessible for the benefit of people.

Please consider supporting Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary by Adopting an Acre. Your donation of \$1,000 to Adopt an Acre will provide much needed support of our work. As part of our family, you will receive a stunning picture of the river combined with your personalized certificate, illustrating your support and passion for our natural heritage.

Each year that you Adopt an Acre at Rowe Sanctuary, you will receive a certificate with a different picture of the river and/or its wildlife. You will periodically receive the Crane River Chronicles newsletter with special behind-the-scenes stories and features about Rowe Sanctuary, as well as invitations to participate in certain habitat management activities at the Sanctuary. In addition, you will become part of our Braided River Society, at the Piping Plover level and be listed as such in our newsletter and the Audubon Nebraska Annual Report.

Become part of the vision to improve and expand essential habitat on the Platte River for these majestic birds. Adopt today!

Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary Newsletter

The Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary newsletter is written especially for you. We would like to get your feedback and suggestions on the newsletter content, layout, timeliness, and frequency. Please go to this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RoweSanctuary> and complete a brief survey. Thank you for your input!

Crane River
CHRONICLES

Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary
44450 Elm Island Road
Gibbon, NE 68840-4019

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CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

*Crane Cam - To watch the river, please
go to <http://rowe.audubon.org/crane-cam>.*

The mission of Rowe Sanctuary is to conserve Platte River ecosystems for cranes and other wildlife.



100% POST CONSUMER WASTE


IAIN NICOLSON Audubon
CENTER AT ROWE SANCTUARY

44450 Elm Island Road
Gibbon, NE 68840
Phone: (308) 468-5282
rowe.audubon.org

Open Monday - Friday 9 - 5; Sunday 1 - 4

Open 7 days a week Feb. 15 - April 15

Bill Taddicken - Director

Keanna Leonard - Education Director

Heidi LaClair - Education Assistant

Tess Bruner - SOAR Coordinator

Andrew Pierson - Director of Conservation

Anne Winkel - Habitat Technician

Kent Skaggs - Office Manager

Sharon Ingram - Gift Shop Manager

Audubon Nebraska

Marian Langan - Executive Director

Melissa Filipi - Director of Philanthropy

Carey Collingham - Corporate and Foundation Coordinator

Cindy Houlden - Donor Relations Coordinator

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Rowe Wish List

4x4 Mid-Size Utility Tractor

Small compact camcorder

Microphone and Sound System
for outdoor events

IPad

Small Trailer to pull behind an ATV

5 new office chairs

\$5 Million Endowment

Recent Donation:

Commercial Vacuum Cleaner



Thanks to all of you who have liked us on Facebook. Be sure to check out our page to see what's happening throughout the year.