



IAIN NICOLSON Audubon CENTER AT ROWE SANCTUARY

Crane River CHRONICLES

WINTER 2016



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



photo by Don Brockmeier

Sandhill Cranes often utilize the south channel and adjacent meadows as a secondary roost. The proposed vehicle pull-out will provide great views of this area.

New Vehicle Pull-off Will Offer Views of South Channel Crane Roost

A new wildlife viewing area will soon be available for crane watchers at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary. The pull-off will be on County Road 43 north of a pond on the far south channel of the Platte River. The project is part of Audubon's 50-year master site plan at Rowe Sanctuary and is being funded through generous support from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and Central Platte Natural Resources District.

"The wet meadow adjacent to this pull-off is heavily used as a secondary roost and loafing area by Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl every spring," said Rowe Sanctuary Director of Conservation Andrew Pierson. "The pull-off will help alleviate congestion created by motorists who stop on the county road to view the cranes and will also hopefully reduce stress on the birds."

The new pull-off will be designed to hold around 25 vehicles and will feature a screening fence with viewing portals to help shield resting birds from eager wildlife viewers. Pierson feels that the addition of a screening fence will help reduce disturbance to cranes while not impeding viewing.

The new pull-off will be located on habitat Audubon protected in 2014 when 590 acres were added to the sanctuary. The grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust is also funding restoration efforts on the wet meadow. Pierson added that the pull-off will be a good place to spot grassland and water birds throughout the year.

Calendar of Events
p.2

A River Runs Through It
p.3

Volunteer
p.5

Outreach & Education
p.7

Sandhill Crane Spring Migration Viewing Experiences

CRANE VIEWING TOURS
March 4 - April 9

Fees (sales tax not included):

March 4 - 16: \$25.00/person/tour

March 17 - April 2 (Peak Season):
\$35.00/person/tour

April 3 - 9: \$25.00/person/tour

Make your reservation beginning

Tuesday, January 3, 2017,

by visiting

reservations.rowesanctuary.org

or calling (308) 468-5282

between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM CST

OVERNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY BLINDS

March 18 - April 8

Fee: \$225/night

EVENING PHOTOGRAPHERS ONLY

CRANE TOUR

March 18 - April 8

Fee: \$60/person

Reservations for these experiences must be made
by calling (308) 468-5282 between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm CST



MESSAGE FROM INTERIM STATE DIRECTOR



Hello,
Most of you know me as the Director at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary. I am now also the interim Audubon Nebraska State Director as our friend and colleague Marian Langan takes time off to recover from some personal health issues. I assure you that Audubon's important conservation work in Nebraska and all through the Central Flyway continues to

be at the forefront of what all of the staff, volunteers, and supporters continue to do all year long. Protecting, restoring, and expanding our important grasslands throughout the state as well as the habitat on the Platte River are of the highest priority. Audubon's work in Nebraska has seen tremendous success for more than 42 years and will continue to be critical to protect these natural treasures so important to wildlife.

We are looking far into the future to ensure these places continue to be important to wildlife and loved and cared for by people. Part of that future vision must include engaging our children with the natural world so they too become caretakers. That is why one of the most important tools for conservation continues to be the experiences created for youth and adults in our education programs at both Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Prairie and Iain Nicolson Audubon Center. Thank you all for caring enough to help protect our natural world and engage our youth in a culture of conservation.

Sincerely,

Bill Taddicken
Interim Director, Audubon Nebraska

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information on upcoming events call (308) 468-5282 or visit rowe.audubon.org and click Rowe Events.

Crane Viewing Tour Reservations

BEGINNING JANUARY 3, 2017, 9:00 AM

Reservations can be made on-line at reservations.rowedanctuary.org or by calling (308) 468-5282.

Crane Viewing Tours

MARCH 4 - APRIL 9, 2017

Rowe Crane Carnival

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017

\$5 per person/\$10 per family

A one-of-a-kind carnival for all ages with an emphasis on fun. Come explore the wild life of Sandhill Cranes at Rowe Sanctuary!

Crane Behavior Basics

MARCH 4 - APRIL 9, 2017, 9-10 AM OR 3:30-4:30 PM DAILY

\$10 per person.

Want to make your crane viewing experience more enjoyable? You will be introduced to Sandhill Crane behaviors easily observed in the fields and viewing blinds. Call (308) 468-5282 to make reservations. This program is not suitable for children under 12 years of age.

47th Annual Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival

MARCH 16 - MARCH 19, 2017

Holiday Inn, Kearney

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT 2016



Photo by Don Brockmeier

proceeds raised at "A River Runs Through It" support efforts to conserve this very important habitat and to conduct programs, for all ages, to experience the joys of nature.

The celebration began with a social hour with music provided by cellist Carey Collingham. Guests enjoyed a gourmet dinner prepared by Chef Dario Schicke of Dario's Brasserie and Avoli Osteria in Omaha, Nebraska. A live auction completed the amazing evening by the river.



Photo by Don Brockmeier

Prairie River Keeper Award Presented at Signature Event

On Saturday, October 8, 100 supporters raised over \$20,000 to support the conservation efforts of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. All

The Stewardship Board at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary was honored to present the inaugural Prairie River Keeper Award to Dr. Paul Johnsgard during the evening's festivities. This award was created to recognize outstanding leadership and support in conservation of Nebraska's Platte River and the cranes.

Dr. Johnsgard was honored to receive this recognition of his work.

We would like to thank our sponsors: Ashley Furniture Home Store, Bill's Liquor, Cottonwood Veterinary Clinic, Cunningham's Bar and Grill, Jacy and Darrel Dunham, Jennifer and Steve Homan, Jacobsen Orr Lindstrom & Holbrook, Kearney Floral, Dr. Walter and Jenni Martin, Nebraska Fire and Sprinkler, The Retreat at Cottonwood, Dario and Amy Schicke, Tru Café, and Dr. John and Reven Wright.

Our deepest thanks to committee members Leslie Abegglen, Kate Benzel, Jacy Dunham, Jeni Homan, Carol Lindstrom, Jenni Martin, and Carol Wahl.



Photo by Don Brockmeier

Fund-A-Need

Each year the Rowe Sanctuary Stewardship Board identifies a need that will be funded with donations at A River Runs Through It. This year, all donations to our Fund-A-Need helped construct three overnight photo blinds. The week of October 24, a group of volunteers spent approximately 172 hours constructing the three new blinds using plans drafted by volunteer Terry Wilner. These blinds will provide excellent viewing opportunities for serious nature photographers and crane enthusiasts of crane roosts on the Platte River.



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

Dudley Friskopp works on the roof of one of the new blinds.



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

From left - Bob Royer, Roy Schademann, Ed Berglund, Keith Haussler, Andrew Pierson, Darwin Hinrichs, and Daryl Tepley.

CRANE SEASON

2016 Crane Season At-A-Glance

Estimated Total Visitors	22,477
Guided Crane Viewing Tours	1,182
Individual Tour Participants	4,526
Photographer Reservations	179
Crane Behavior Class participants	785
"Crane Cam" views	374,845
"Crane Cam" followers	1,242
Estimated Visitor Spending Impact	~\$2.8m
Estimated Total Economic Impact	~\$11.5m



Photo by Don Brockmeier



Photo by Xiao-Dong Wang

Rowe Sanctuary Unveils Winners of Photo Contest

Rowe Sanctuary announced the winners of its first photo contest in October at our annual fundraiser, "A River Runs Through It."

This year's Grand Prize winner was Xiao-Dong Wang of St. Louis, Missouri. "We received over 100 fabulous entries for the Cranes of Rowe Sanctuary 2016 Photo Contest, and the top 13 entries were selected for the 2017 Cranes of Rowe Sanctuary Calendar," stated Audubon Director of Community Outreach Anne Winkel.

Photos were judged by a select panel of Rowe Sanctuary Stewardship Board members and regional photographers. Guests in the overnight viewing blinds during the 2016 Sandhill Crane Migration were eligible to enter this year's photo contest. Rowe Sanctuary's website has all of the

contest winners. To order your limited edition calendar, visit the gift shop page on our website: store.rowesanctuary.org.

Plans for the 2017 Cranes of Rowe Sanctuary Photo Contest are being finalized. Details will be released in January.

Coming Soon - Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival

The 47th annual Crane Festival will take place the weekend of March 16-19, 2017, in Kearney, Nebraska. In addition to the ever popular sunrise and sunset trips to Rowe Sanctuary's viewing blinds, you can listen...to migratory birds! (Rowe offers guided sunrise and sunset viewing trips starting in March through the first week of April. See their website for details on how to experience the crane migration.)

The festival's Saturday night banquet speaker will be actress and author Jane Alexander. Her new book is *Wild Things, Wild Places*. In addition, other main speakers are Iliana Pena, Director of Conservation from Audubon Texas; and Matt Anderson, Audubon's Vice President of Climate Change.

See the festival website for more information: Nebraskacranefestival.org.



VOLUNTEER

Volunteers Needed for Crane Season 2017

We always rely heavily on our volunteers to have a successful crane season, but this year we will be relying on them even MORE. Because of new legislation, all staff who have been on salary will be shifted to hourly. This means staff will need to be much more time-conscious. Have you always wanted to volunteer during the annual crane migration but haven't? Well, this is your chance! Volunteers help with every aspect of crane season from guiding visitors, to leading crane viewing trips, running the gift shop, answering phones, helping with maintenance duties, and much more. If you are interested in any of these tasks, please write Anne at awinkel@audubon.org. She would love to answer any additional questions you may have.



JOIN us for Crane Season 2017!

Last year we implemented a new format for volunteer training that makes it accessible to nearly every sort of schedule. We will be offering training sessions at Rowe Sanctuary, through Internet webinars, and will be recording them to post on YouTube. Stay tuned for more info.

2017 Volunteer Training

Training #1: February 2 and February 5, 2017

Training # 2: February 9 and February 12, 2017

Training # 3: February 16 and February 19, 2017

WEEKLY OVERVIEW:

February 19-25 - We are just entering into extended visitation hours for the migration and will be open 8-5:30 pm. We will be taking a lot of reservations and questions about Sandhill Cranes on the phone as well as receiving drop by visitors

February 26-March 4 - Visitors continue to pick up and we will begin to start guided tours. We will begin to get busy in the gift shop. We will be answering lots of questions about Sandhill Cranes as well as taking Blind reservations.

March 5-11 - Season just getting started, visitation will be lower but picking up. We will need someone at the gift shop throughout the entire day. We will be answering lots of questions about Sandhill Cranes as well as taking Blind reservations.

March 12-18 - Sandhill Crane numbers will continue to grow and our visitation picks up. This week will end with the Audubon Crane Festival. This will begin our busy season where we will need a fully staffed volunteer corps including reservations, phone receptionists, guides and much more. We will also begin our photo experiences this week. Audubon's Crane Festival occurs during this week and we will be needing volunteers both at the center and at the festival.

March 19-25 - Visitation will be high and viewing blinds will likely be full. Photo blind experiences continue. We will need a fully staffed volunteer corp including reservations, phone receptionists, and guides. Most likely Sandhill Crane Numbers will be at their peak during this week.

March 26-April 1 - Visitation will be high and viewing blinds will likely be full. Photo blind experiences continue. We will need a fully staffed volunteer corp including reservations, phone receptionists, guides. By the end of the week we will likely be seeing a drop in both visitation and sandhill cranes.

April 2-9 - Both visitation and Sandhill Cranes number will be on the decline. We do our annual fundraiser, Celebration, during this week. This also is the best week to get a chance at seeing Whooping Cranes. Photo blinds continue.

April 10-14 - We will no longer be giving guided blind tours. This will be our last week of operating in crane season hours. This is the week we will clean up viewing blinds, storing blind equipment and transition out of Crane Season. We will no longer be accepting reservations but will still be receiving visitors.



DATES TO REMEMBER:

Extended Visitor Center Hours: February 15 - April 15

Crane Carnival: Saturday, March 11

Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival: March:16-19

Crane Viewing Tours: March 4 - April 9

Overnight Photography Blinds: March 18 - April 8

Morning and Evening Photographers Crane Tour:

March 18 - April 8

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

What Will Your Legacy Be?

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary's conservation work on the Platte River reaches new heights year after year. Consider investing in the future of our conservation work. You can help make a better future for the cranes, Nebraska's birds, and other wildlife by including Rowe Sanctuary in your estate plans.

Naming our programs in your estate plan can be as simple as adding this language:

I bequeath (dollar amount or % of estate) to the National Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, with its principal offices located at 225 Varick Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10014, for the permanent endowment of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. Tax ID # 13-1624102.

If you choose to include Rowe Sanctuary in your estate plan, please let us know so we can express our gratitude.

Don't Forget this Charitable Giving Option!

If you are age 70½ and older, you can make an outright gift from your IRA to Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary without claiming the distribution as income. This is a great way to support our work, preserve the Platte River, educate youth and adults, and provide a safe haven for the cranes, other birds, and wildlife in our area.

If you would like more information, please contact Melissa Filipi at (402) 797-2301 or mfilipi@audubon.org. You can also contact Shari Kolding, Director of Gift Planning, National Audubon Society, (512) 236-9076; skolding@audubon.org.

Qualified distributions should be sent directly from your IRA plan administrator to:

Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary
44450 Elm Island Rd
Gibbon, NE 68840

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 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 on page 8 for additional gift ideas.
- Become a monthly donor. You can provide regular, ongoing support for our work by visiting our website, 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.

HABITAT TECHNICIAN TAKES ON NEW ROLE



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

We are excited to announce that Cody Wagner, Rowe's Habitat Technician, has accepted the position of Habitat and Outreach Program Assistant. Cody's main responsibility will be coordinating implementation of the EPA wetland project (see page 7). He will also assist the habitat and outreach programs. We are sure he will stay busy!

OUTREACH & EDUCATION



Photos by Rowe Sanctuary Staff



Local Schoolchildren Learn About Wetlands

Gibbon and Wood River after-school programs visited Rowe Sanctuary in October and learned about some of the creatures who call the wetlands their home. Along with dip-netting for snails, fish, larvae, flat worms, and more in the educational wetland, the students also spent time learning about a common creature living in the Platte River, the crawfish.

CONSERVATION

Imperiled Snake Spotted at Rowe Sanctuary

In March, visiting faculty and students from the University of Nebraska at Kearney observed a rare red-bellied snake at Rowe Sanctuary. The aptly named snake is



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

considered imperiled in Nebraska, a Tier 2 at-risk species in our state wildlife action plan. The sighting was significant because 1) any record is significant, the March sighting at Rowe was only the third in Buffalo County and one of only 34 records in the state since 1960, and 2) it was the earliest record in the state by nearly a month.

While relatively common in the Eastern United States, the red-bellied snake's range fades as you get west of the Mississippi River except for isolated populations on the Central Platte River in Nebraska and the Black Hills in South Dakota. The early observation date may also have special significance. UNK is producing a paper aimed at bringing attention to this woodland species and the effect of early emergence coinciding with spring migration. Two additional sightings at Rowe Sanctuary in October are two of the latest on record, further indicating that this species is responding to changes in its environment.



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

Plains Topminnow

The Rowe Sanctuary Conservation Committee had the pleasure of releasing a small number of Plains topminnow during its October meeting. The fish, provided by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, are considered vulnerable in Nebraska and are believed to be already extirpated from a growing area of their range in the central Great Plains. Plains topminnow rely on backwaters and shallow off-channel parts of rivers and streams. The release site at Rowe was previously more extensively stocked with Plains topminnow and provides a critical refuge for this and other at-risk species.

New Wetlands Project to Benefit KHS Students

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary was awarded an Environmental Protection Agency grant for the creation of a wetland at Kearney's new public high school. Rowe Sanctuary staff will be leading the design process for this wetland and helping to create curriculum for Kearney Senior High School to adequately utilize this outstanding resource. KHS students will help plant native species, conduct monitoring projects as the area is restored, and take on management under the guiding hand of Rowe Sanctuary staff and KHS educators.

Our hope is to create a model in Kearney for environmental education and community involvement by engaging youth and community members in all phases of this project, a model that can be replicated in other communities. By taking on a sense of ownership of this wetland, Kearney will become a hub of environmental stewardship befitting the Sandhill Crane Capital of the World.

Crane River
CHRONICLES

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

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 22
GIBBON, NE 68840

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

*The mission of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary is
to conserve and restore the Platte River ecosystem, focusing on cranes, other wildlife, and their
habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.*



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
Andrew Pierson - Director of Conservation
Kent Skaggs - Operations Manager
Anne Winkel - Community Outreach Coordinator
Cody Wagner - Habitat & Outreach Program Assistant
Sharon Ingram - Nature Store Manager/Buyer
Autumn Taddicken - Project Manager

Audubon Nebraska

Marian Langan - Executive Director
Melissa Filipi - Director of Philanthropy
Carey Collingham - Corporate and Foundation Coordinator
Cindy Houlden - Donor Relations Coordinator
Kevin Pogue - Important Bird Areas Project Coordinator

Stewardship Advisory Board

Charles Bicak - Chair	Jacy Dunham
Ed Berglund - Vice Chair	Ben Hirschfeld
Leslie Abegglen	Carol Lindstrom
Rob Ahlschwede	Jennifer Martin
Susan Ahlschwede	Brian Moody
Kate Benzel	Margery Nicolson
Stan Dart	Greg Williams

Rowe Wish List

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- (40) 4" Fine Mesh Aquatic Dip Nets - \$2.50 each
- (40) 5X 60mm Magnifier Pocket Folding Magnifying Glass Loupes - \$5 each
- (40) Private Eye Loupe-on-a-Lanyard - \$5 each
- (10) Telescoping Inspection Mirrors - \$9 each
- (6) Two-way Bug Viewers - \$10 each
- Electric Pencil Sharpener (good quality) - \$20
- (6) Binoculars for public use - \$150 each

HABITAT PROGRAMS

- (2) Chain Saw Chaps - \$125 each
- SP1 Professional Backpack Sprayer, 4-Gallon - \$150
- Drone - \$2000
- (2) 40" Flat-screen TVs for display use - \$300 each
- 3-point Post Hole Digger - \$800
- (4) Trail Cams - \$200 each



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.