

Crane River
CHRONICLES

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

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

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

Crane River
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
Sonceyrae Kondrotis - Office Manager
Cody Wagner - Habitat Manager
Beka Yates - Education Director
Sharon Ingram - Nature Store Manager/Buyer
Wendy Horine - Director of Community Outreach

Audubon Nebraska

Bill Taddicken - Interim Director
Autumn Taddicken - Director of Development
Andrew Pierson - State Director of Conservation
Jason St. Sauver - State Director of Education and Outreach
Kevin Poague - Important Bird Areas Project Coordinator
Anne Winkel - Projects and Events Coordinator

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SPRING 2018



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Crane Festival a Success

Audubon Nebraska's 2018 Crane Festival was a huge success, with over 250 participants from all over the country and world. This year we had an exciting line-up of speakers, including our main speakers: Kathy Wise of Audubon Arizona, speaking on Plant-Friendly Communities, Rich Beilfuss of the International Crane Foundation; and Noppadol Paothong, an award-winning nature photographer, speaking about his book, "Sage Grouse, Icon of the West."

This year we were able to continue many popular field trips that we hold annually, including crane viewing and various bird watching opportunities. We also worked with two new outfitters to view Prairie-Chickens and Sharp-tailed Grouse. In addition, we collaborated with the Willa Cather Archives and the Willa Cather Foundation to do an exciting joint field trip, which combined crane viewing and tours of Willa Cather's hometown of Red Cloud, NE.

Volunteers were an integral part of pulling off this event; we received help from over 30 of our great volunteers.

THANK YOU TO:

*Lawrence Burman for
the Flat Screen Television
and
Lyle White for
the Power Washer*

Rowe Wish List

- (40) 5X 60mm Magnifying Glass Loupes- \$5 each
- (10) Telescoping Inspection Mirrors - \$9 each
- (12) Student Insect Nets- \$12.75 each
- (30) Children's Water Shoes - \$12 each

HABITAT PROGRAMS

- 3- Point Post Hole Digger - \$800
- (2) Trail Cams - \$200
- (20) Leather Gloves for Volunteers - \$9 each
- (6) Safety Goggles for Fire Crew - \$25 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.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



ROWE ADVENTURES

No registration required. Rowe Adventure Programs are free to attend, free will donations are encouraged.

SATURDAY, JULY 14: 7:30 PM-9:30 PM Rowe Adventures: Firefly Picnic

The Firefly Picnic is a naturally good time for all ages! Bring a snack picnic and experience the sunset on the Platte River. Then spend a relaxing evening investigating fireflies and other nighttime insects. You will also get the chance to help with a citizen science project about fireflies and record data for a real scientific study!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM Rowe Adventures: Play in the Platte

Families are invited to come explore the Platte River habitat and the critters that call it home. If water levels permit we will spend most of the time in the river. Please come dressed for the weather and for safety reasons shoes are required to play in the river. Water shoes or old tennis shoes are preferred.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8: 1:00 PM-4:00 PM Rowe Adventures: Radical Reptiles

Come out and explore the world of reptiles. Learn about these cool creatures and go exploring to observe them in their habitat. Special reptile presentations by herpetologist Dennis Ferraro will occur in the visitor's center (times TBD). Be sure to wear weather appropriate attire, including walking shoes.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27: 6:00 PM-9:00 PM Rowe Adventures: Owl Prowl

Come over to the dark side of Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary and meet the amazing critters that make their living at night. This Owl Prowl offers an exciting multi-generational opportunity to learn more about the fascinating lives of owls and other animals that thrive at night. A nighttime hike to explore these animals will also occur, so be sure to dress for the weather.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10: 1:00 PM-4:00 PM Rowe Adventures: Fall into Winter

The leaves on the trees are not the only things changing. Nature has many ways to survive the upcoming cold winter months. Come learn about different strategies animals and plants use to survive the cold and explore the trails for these changes. Be sure to dress according to the weather.

OTHER HAPPENINGS

SATURDAY, JULY 21: 8:30 AM-11:30 AM Volunteer Project Day

Come out and help Rowe complete important projects while having fun and making new friends.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9: 5:00 PM-8:00 PM Ice Cream Volunteer Social

Stan Dart will present "The Methuselah Tree." In the high mountains of western Nevada stands a grove of bristlecone pines. Within that grove stands the oldest living tree - The Methuselah Tree. But how do we know its age? We'll explore dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) and how trees preserve information about past climate, forest fires, insect infestations, and even great violins. Rowe will provide ice cream and pies!! Everyone is welcome. RSVP required. Call Wendy at 308-568-5282.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18: 8:30 AM-11:30 AM Volunteer Project Day

Come out and help Rowe complete important projects while having fun and making new friends.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 "A River Runs Through It"

Starting at 5:00pm with social time and cocktails guests will enjoy an evening including a gourmet meal provided by Dan Sidner and one of his top chefs from Wisconsin. Following the meal enjoy a fundraising auction featuring items such as a stay at Pickering Creek Audubon Center on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, and a photograph by world famous nature photographer Joel Sartore.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

PLATTE RIVER WATER TRANSFER OPPOSED BY AUDUBON



Audubon is opposing an application by Lower Republican NRD, Tri-Basins NRD, and Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District to remove water from the Platte River and transfer it to the Republican River to alleviate that basin's water debt to Kansas. For many reasons this is bad for the Platte River and the wildlife and people that rely upon it.

First, the Platte River has its own water issues. Audubon has been leading conservation through the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP), which was developed to meet the needs of endangered and threatened species that rely on the Platte River. Over the past nine years of the PRRIP there has not been a single year where there has been enough water to meet the water goals set forth by the program to protect habitat for Whooping Cranes, Least Terns, and Piping Plovers. Removing even more water threatens the goals of a program that is one of our most important management tools to help these species.

Currently 70% of the water that historically came down the Platte River is gone before it gets to Kearney. This river has compromised all the water that it can and it is not prudent to remove even more. Studies both recent and in the past have shown the river needs annual high water flows to maintain the wide shallow channels and the open sandbars that the birds need for roosting and nesting. These are the exact flows that this diversion targets. This diversion will add to the degradation of the river.

In addition to water issues, there is the threat of transferring Invasive species into other parts of Nebraska and Kansas. The proposed delivery route for the transfer is Turkey Creek. Landowners all along Turkey Creek will be required to battle Purple Loosestrife, Phragmites, and possibly Salt Cedar all along the course. Plants are not the only issue. Asian carp, an incredibly damaging invasive species, will also end up in Turkey Creek, the Republican River, and in Kansas.



Over 70% of the Platte's water is already diverted before it reaches Kearney.

We are working to stop this diversion with all the resources at our disposal. It is important to note, if the Department of Natural Resources approves this transfer it will set a precedent for even more, and the river will continue to die the death of a thousand cuts.

Thank all of you for supporting Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary. With your help, we will continue to protect this river.

Director, Rowe Sanctuary

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

Legacy Gifts

One of the best ways to sustain the Platte River is to make a legacy gift to the National Audubon Society that specifies your support for the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. Please consider this simple way to deepen your commitment to the Platte River and the birds who depend upon this amazing resource. It is easy to change your legacy gift if your circumstances change. The following information and wording will ensure that your intentions now will help the Platte River in the future.

Types of Bequests

There are several ways to write your future legacy:

- Wills/Living Trusts. You can bequest a portion of your estate through a will or revocable trust.
- Retirement Plans. You can designate all or portions of these funds as a gift.
- Life Insurance Policies. Simply name Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary as a beneficiary to create a conservation legacy beyond the original insurance purpose.
- Certificates of Deposit. Your financial institution can assist you in the easy process of naming Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary as a beneficiary for any certificate of deposit, bank or brokerage account.

Suggested Bequest Language

"I/We bequeath _____% of my residuary estate (or a specific sum of \$ _____) to the National Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit environmental conservation organization with its headquarters at 225 Varick St., 7th Fl, New York, NY 10014 for the permanent endowment of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary (also known as "Rowe Sanctuary"). Federal Tax ID #13-1624102"

Grinnell Legacy Society

Those who make bequests to Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary join thousands of others in the Grinnell Society. The Society is made up of individuals who have committed to conserving birds and the places birds and people need far into the future.

To obtain additional information about legacy gifts, please contact Shari Kolding at skolding@audubon.org or (512) 236-9076. If you have already included Rowe Sanctuary in your will, please let us know that as well, so that we can welcome you into the Grinnell Legacy Society.

BLUES ON THE BANKS

Friday, August 31 - 6:30-9:30 pm

Enjoy a relaxing evening of music on the banks of the Platte River with the OK Sisters with OK Sisters and special guests. We'll have brats, burgers, and special brews, along with nature walks in the summer prairie grasses. This is a 21 or older event. Admission is \$20/ person and provides all participants three tickets to purchase any combination of brats, burgers, or specialty brews. All items are one ticket. Additional tickets can be purchased at the event.

Reservations are required by Monday August 20. Space is limited so register early! This event will be outdoors by the Platte River, please bring your own lawn chair or blanket to sit on.

For more information call 308-468-5282



EDUCATION

Kearney Public 2nd Grade Classes Explore Rowe

Rowe Sanctuary was pleased to partner with the Kearney Public Schools 2nd grade classes in April. Over the course of four days, 420 students came out to Rowe and experienced nature. The weather was still very cold for early spring with temperatures in the 30s and was often very windy. The students got to explore the plants growing in a prairie, dissect a rotten log looking for critters, and take a nature hike looking for tracks, scat and signs of animal activity.

One student said "This field trip is the most fun thing I have ever done. It is even more fun than recess and video games!"

Scholarships for these programs were given to the schools through the Watchable Wildlife grant.



CONTACT US

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Gibbon, NE 68840-4019

If you would like to receive *Crane River Chronicles* electronically, email rowesanctuary@audubon.org or call (308) 468-5282.

Looking for a Place to Host an Event?

Remember Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary when planning business meetings, retreats, or parties. (308) 468-5282 for information and rates.

PHONE: (308) 468-5282

EMAIL: rowesanctuary@audubon.org

WEBSITE: rowe.audubon.org

FACEBOOK: [audubonsrowesanctuary](https://www.facebook.com/audubonsrowesanctuary)

TWITTER: [rowesanctuary](https://twitter.com/rowesanctuary)

CRANE CAM: rowe.audubon.org/crane-cam

CONSERVATION

Audubon's Conservation Ranching: Saving Birds on America's Working Lands

Most of the vast native prairie that originally covered over 300 million acres of the Great Plains has been lost to conversion to agriculture and development. The grasslands that remain have been degraded by a range of factors, including invasive species encroachment, urbanization, energy development, and unsustainable livestock management practices. As a result, grassland birds have suffered an unparalleled decline over the past half century. This calls for Audubon's action.

To combat the negative effects of grassland degradation – and to keep grass on the landscape – Audubon has developed the Conservation Ranching program. This market-based conservation approach offers incentives for good grassland stewardship through a certification label on beef products. For the first time, consumers can contribute to grassland conservation efforts by selectively purchasing beef from Audubon-certified farms and ranches.

The program is a collaboration between Audubon Nebraska, Audubon Dakotas, Audubon New Mexico, Audubon Rockies, Audubon Missouri, and Audubon Texas with local ranchers that aims to enhance millions of acres of grassland bird habitat. For each ranch, a Habitat Management Plan is developed that benefits target grassland bird species.

Regenerative grazing practices are adopted that mimic past grazing by bison. Pastures are allowed to rest and recover, resulting in a diversity of grassland vegetation across a ranch. To be certified, each ranch must also meet program protocols related to Forage

and Feeding, Animal Health and Welfare, and Environmental Sustainability. Animals in the program must spend their entire lives on grasslands. Feedlots are not allowed, and growth hormones and antibiotics are strictly prohibited.

The Audubon certification seal is expected to bring a broad market appeal that should enhance

demand by consumers that want options for beef that is sustainably raised and benefits wildlife habitat. For more information about the Conservation Ranching program in Nebraska contact Andrew Pierson at apierson@audubon.org.



Whooping Cranes use Platte River at Rowe Sanctuary

Rowe Sanctuary once again saw significant Whooping Crane use during the 2018 spring migration season. Still one of the rarest North American birds, it was brought back from the brink of extinction in the 1940s to numbers of just over 400 wild, migrating birds today. This population winters on the Texas gulf coast and flies 2400 miles north to nest around Wood Buffalo National Park in central Canada. A significant stopover site along that route is the central Platte River.

As of the end of season this year, there were seven confirmed accounts of Whooping Cranes on the sanctuary totaling 15 individual birds. The longest stay was a single bird that remained for 23 days and by all accounts was the first to arrive and the last to leave. A pair stayed for 4 days in early April while all other sightings were reported only over a one-night period.

More than 100 Whooping Cranes were observed on the central Platte River this record season. Most of those were utilizing habitat protected by conservation organizations like Audubon. The work being done by Audubon and its partners is helping to ensure the continued success of this species.

VOLUNTEERS

Find Your Volunteer Reward at Rowe Sanctuary

Research has shown that volunteers live longer and healthier lives! But that's not usually why most folks choose to volunteer. For some, volunteering offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the world around them. For others it provides an opportunity to increase their knowledge about topics of interest to them, learn new skills, or just make new friends and have fun. Regardless of the motivation, what keeps volunteers coming back is they find the experience rewarding in some way. With a number of veteran volunteers able to claim 10 to 15 years or more of service at Rowe Sanctuary, I think it's safe to say they've found their reward.

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary relies heavily on its volunteer corps. Although well-known for its annual Sandhill Crane migration activities, the staff at Rowe is involved in many other conservation, education and fund-raising activities year-round. Without the passion and dedication of its volunteers, Rowe's conservation mission would be greatly hindered. Nearly 100 active volunteers work as crane season viewing guides, staff the visitor center's information desk and gift shop, answer phones and provide assistance with clerical functions, assist with educational programs and special events, and provide labor for a variety of conservation and maintenance tasks. Local volunteers may travel up to an hour or so to reach the sanctuary, while our distance volunteers reside not only throughout the rest of Nebraska, but hail from many other states and even Canada.

Every hour of work that a volunteer donates to Rowe equates to a dollar amount which can then be used as cost share for grant funding to further support Rowe's mission. Already in 2018, volunteers have donated nearly 6,500 hours of their time. Way to go Rowe volunteers!

Both our local and distance volunteers serve important roles. Most of our distance volunteers donate their time during the very busy annual crane season, from mid-February through mid-April. Many of them stay a week or two, while a few others stay a month or more. Without their tireless efforts, we could not offer the public the opportunity to participate in America's greatest migration.

Local volunteers as well devote a large number of hours during this time of year. We also rely heavily on our local volunteers for our other annual and even daily activities. As we embark on the new 50-year plan for Rowe Sanctuary, the need for a larger local volunteer force will continue to grow. The future expansion and subsequent success of Rowe Sanctuary and its mission lies within a proverbial sleeping giant – those local residents who care about the future of their community and the abundant natural resources of the Platte River, but who have not yet discovered their personal reward in volunteering. Rowe offers many treasures – the wildlife, the river, opportunities for learning, for new friends, for quiet moments of solitude. We invite everyone to volunteer and find their reward at Rowe Sanctuary.



Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary has received some extra volunteer help over the past year! It has been our pleasure to work with Integrated Life Choices (ILC) and their outstanding group of volunteers. ILC works with people that have intellectual and developmental disabilities to help provide them with a fulfilling life while gaining skills important for independence. ILC volunteers have helped weed gardens, clean the center, prepare mailings, and many more important jobs. This past year our local ILC participants from Kearney and Grand Island have volunteered for over 1,250 hours! We have loved getting to know these individuals and they love the opportunity to get out into nature. We are truly excited to continue this great partnership into the future!