



Audubon

Iain Nicolson
Audubon Center
at Rowe Sanctuary

Crane River CHRONICLES

FALL 2018



AUDUBON'S NEBRASKA CRANE FESTIVAL 2019

NEBRASKA CRANE FESTIVAL, MARCH 21-24, 2019

In its 49th year, the festival brings together hundreds of crane enthusiasts from around the country to Kearney, Nebraska, to interact with a wide range of environmental speakers, take part in incredible birding trips, and best of all, experience the world's largest gathering of Sandhill Cranes!



We will be hosting David Mizejewski as the banquet speaker. David is a television host, media personality, author, blogger, and a naturalist with the National Wildlife Federation. David is dedicated to using his knowledge and his infectious enthusiasm to help others understand the wonders of the natural world, and how to live sustainably.

Audubon Nebraska is also excited to announce, actress Lili Taylor will be our lunchtime speaker on March 23 during the 2019 Crane Festival. Ms. Taylor has starred in such films as *Mystic Pizza*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, and *The Conjuring*. Her television highlights include "American Crime,"

HBO's "Six Feet Under" and Fox's "The X-Files," all of which garnered her Emmy nominations. She just completed work on the series "Chambers" for Netflix. She is passionate about bird conservation including her own backyard. She currently serves on the boards of the National Audubon Society and the American Birding Association.



Visit Audubon Nebraska's festival web page, ne.audubon.org/cranefestival for updates on the Crane Festival's line-up of exciting concurrent sessions, field trips, and more.

Tickets for the 2019 Nebraska Crane Festival will be available beginning December 10, 2018.

To receive periodic e-mail updates on festival news and activities, contact us at nebraska@audubon.org.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



FIGHTING TO PROTECT 32 BILLION GALLONS OF PLATTE RIVER WATER

Audubon in Nebraska continues its fight to stop a proposed project by the Lower Republican NRD, Tri-Basin NRD, and Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, to remove 32 billion gallons of water annually from the Platte River and transfer it to the

Republican River for that basin's water debt to Kansas. If passed this would be the first inter-basin water transfer in Nebraska and will set the precedent for many more if it is successful.

The Platte has its own water issues. Audubon has been working on the Platte River Recovery Program to manage the Platte River for Whooping Cranes, Least Terns and Piping Plovers for the past ten years. During that time there has not been a single year where there has been enough water to meet that program's water goals. This program is an agreement with water stakeholders in Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming as well as the Federal Government to meet Endangered Species Act requirements.

Currently, 70% of the historic Platte River flows are now gone before they get to the Central Platte. This water loss has led to 90% of the historical open channel habitat to be lost for birds. The current proposal would be the first step towards multiple proposals just like it.

Audubon has filed a notice of legal standing and a formal objection to the Department of Natural Resources in regards to this water transfer proposal. Along with Audubon, six additional water stakeholders filed formal legal objections, as well as another ninety objections filed from citizens of Nebraska and Kansas and the Governor of Kansas. These were in large part a result of requests to Audubon Chapters and letters to local newspapers by Audubon Nebraska asking for help.

The group making the application has filed a motion to dismiss all of the legal objections and filings for legal standing. Audubon will now file a brief to defend our position. This battle will continue into next year and Audubon staff will continue to stand for the Platte River and the wildlife and people that rely upon it.

Thank you to all of our supporters that make it possible for Audubon to stand up for the river and the wildlife that depend on it. Your support makes it all possible.

Bill Jaddicken

Director, Rowe Sanctuary

VOLUNTEERS

Imagine for a moment Rowe Sanctuary without educational programs or special events like “Blues on the Banks” and “A River Runs Through It”. Imagine the sanctuary grounds and trails overgrown with invasive species and the gift shop a vacant empty space. And imagine...no guided crane viewing experiences! Without our incredible volunteer corps, Rowe Sanctuary would not be the beautiful, welcoming, educational, and engaging place it is. Staff rely heavily on volunteers from around the state, the country, and even Canada, to engage people in the mission to conserve the Platte River. We would not be able to offer or maintain the quality and quantity of programs and conservation activities that we do without this dedicated group.

Every hour a volunteer donates to Rowe Sanctuary, whether it's working in the gift shop, cutting saplings on the prairie, assisting with an education program, or leading a group of excited visitors to a blind, equates to dollars that can be used as match toward grant funds for continued conservation efforts, capital improvements, educational programs, and outreach efforts.

Crane season, which runs from mid-February to mid-April each year, is the busiest time of year at Rowe. In 2018, 117 volunteers donated over 7,000 hours of their time to provide nearly 27,000 visitors the opportunity to learn about “America's Greatest Migration.” We anticipate the 2019 Crane Season to be even bigger. Rowe's volunteers are essential in supporting

the important conservation work on the Platte River for Sandhill Cranes, as well as Whooping Cranes, Piping Plovers, Least Terns and countless other birds and wildlife species. Our volunteers are passionate about the work they do, with many traveling from across the country and staying for several weeks. Many volunteers have been helping this mission for 5, 10, 15, even 20 years or more, to be part of preserving one of North America's last great migrations, and most endangered habitats. And our volunteers are family. Rowe staff looks forward to working with all of our volunteers who come from diverse backgrounds, sharing knowledge and experience not only in working with the cranes and other birds, but in many other common areas of interest. Rowe Sanctuary volunteers are part of a very special group of folks. To simply say “thank you” for all they do, doesn't seem like enough.

We depend on our volunteers year-round, but even more during crane season. We're already gearing up for the 2019 season and welcome anyone interested in becoming a part of our volunteer family to contact us. Regardless of age, experience, physical ability or knowledge about cranes, we are sure to be able to find a spot for you in this incredible experience.

For more information about volunteering, please contact our Director of Community Outreach, Wendy Horine, at whorine@audubon.org or (308) 468-5282.

MAKING IT ALL POSSIBLE

IRA Rollover Gift Supports Conservation and Has Tax Advantages for Donors



Thanks to a law passed in 2015, donors can support the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary with a gift that gives back a tax advantage. Making a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA enables individuals 70 ½ and older to give up to \$100,000 total to their favorite charities, without

claiming the distribution as income. Timing is important as all donations need to be received before December 31 for the current tax year.

Important points to consider:

- For donors age 70 ½ and older.
- The gift must come directly from your IRA account administrator, in the form of a check.
- The gift may come from a ROTH or a Traditional IRA (special exclusions may apply to other types of IRA accounts).
- There is NO income tax on the distribution; there is also no charitable deduction for your gift.

What are the advantages?

- Meet your Minimum Required Distribution (MRD).
- Pay no income tax on the amount withdrawn for your gift.
- Give above your deductible limit of 50% of adjusted gross income.
- Benefit Audubon's work in a meaningful way.

If you are interested, please contact Autumn Taddicken, Audubon Nebraska Director of Development, 308-390-3505 or ataddicken@audubon.org. You can also contact Shari Kolding, Director of Gift Planning, National Audubon Society, 512-236-9076 or skolding@audubon.org.

Please have your IRA plan administrator make the check out to National Audubon Society. Our tax identification number is 13-1624102. Accompanying paperwork should identify your name and address and whether your gift is intended for Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary or another Audubon program. Gifts can be mailed to:

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

A Focus on Grasslands Reflects National Priorities

Working Lands are a major focus of the current National Audubon Society strategic plan. Here in the Great Plains that focus is on landscapes where grassland birds have shown the most sustained population declines of any bird group in North America. Rowe Sanctuary provides a refuge for these species within a highly fragmented working landscape and prairie birds have corresponding importance in our management plans.

More than half of the protected acres at Rowe Sanctuary are grasslands – primarily in the form of wet meadows. This year, because of support from our donors we are:

- Reseeding nearly 120 acres of cropland back to diverse, native grassland. When added to adjacent, remnant prairie these conversions contribute to large size tracts of grasslands – some of the largest left in the Platte River valley – a limiting factor for some bird species.
- Evolving our grassland management approaches to include more prescribed burning, targeted grazing and haying, and rest. These activities assure there is a diversity of plant species and structure to meet the various needs of individual birds.
- Continuing our volunteer seed-harvest project where native seed is collected in more diverse areas of the sanctuary and redistributed in other areas to increase diversity in those locations. Late this summer seed was collected and processed from 15 species of plants.



New Science Tells the Story

Is our grassland conservation work at Rowe really helping grassland birds? Extensive breeding bird surveys using new technologies allow us to map exact locations of birds within Geographic Information System layers that represent annual management activities. This allows us to examine, for example, how target bird species move about the landscape based on timing of prescribed fire, stocking rates of grazing animals, or haying. These surveys are allowing us to track trends in bird density, abundance and occupancy across the sanctuary and inform future conservation decisions to provide the best management for these birds.

This year we also compiled forty years of butterfly survey data from the meadows at Rowe Sanctuary. The July surveys are one of the longest running efforts in the country and show that Rowe is a remaining stronghold for some declining species like the Regal Fritillary. This data also helps to inform our management decisions for these species.



During low flows in the Platte River during October, sandbars at Rowe were disked to clear unwanted vegetation. This annual maintenance of the wide, braided channel assures suitable habitat conditions for roosting cranes in the spring.



Nature Camps Create a Legacy for the Future

Platte River Safari camp has been a staple for the summers of many 2nd-5th grade students for over 20 years. Many campers are second generation attendees, their parents having attended SOAR camp (the precursor to Safari camp) when they were youngsters. Safari camp allows students to make meaningful connections to nature, while also allowing them to get dirty. These interactions with nature at an early age has been proven to lead to environmentally conscious decisions in later years. As some of the campers have gotten older, they have become peer leaders and then teachers for the camps, continuing their engagement with nature as young adults. A number of former campers are now science teachers and conservation professionals, continuing to have a connection to nature in their everyday lives. They are now stewarding their children to engage with nature, as campers.



This new generation of campers includes potential environmental leaders and decision makers of tomorrow. Audubon continues the important work of engaging youth in hands-on experiences in nature in order to establish the important connection to the natural world.

The 2019 Platte River Safari Camp will take place June 17-20 and June 24-27, 2019. Registration will open on December 12, 2018.



New Homeschool Thursdays

Over the past few months, Rowe Sanctuary has continued to offer its traditional educational programming as well as new educational programs. One new program being created for the current school year is Homeschool Thursday, offered once each month. These programs allow homeschool students to learn more about a nature subject as well as socialize with other students their own age. Each program includes hands-on activities for the students to explore and connect with nature.

Another new program offering is the No School Nature Day Camp. Teachers in the Kearney Public Schools are involved in teacher workshops eight days throughout the school year. On these workshop days, students do not attend classes, so Rowe is offering a day camp. These camps allow the students to spend the day exploring nature and learning more about the animal topic of the day. Activities include sorting invertebrates as insects or non-insects, exploring the prairie for insects, dissecting a rotten log and much more.

In addition to new programming, the monthly Rowe Adventures family programs have also been successful. The most recent of these programs was the annual Owl Prowl, held at the end of October. A total of 115 guests attended the program and learned all about owls and other creatures of the night through activities that included night hikes, dissecting owl pellets, and observing live owls from Raptor Recovery.



Kearney Outdoor Learning Area Update

Audubon and Kearney Public Schools' joint outdoor classroom project, the Kearney Outdoor Learning Area (KOLA), is rounding into form. This summer saw many native plants species come back to the area after our restoration efforts. Migratory shorebirds and waterfowl were very appreciative of the added wetlands, which received plenty of use! Overall, 118 bird species have been reported on site.

Kearney Public Schools started classes in August and had the opportunity to use the wetland outdoor classroom for the first time since restoration was completed. The students have focused on water quality testing with chemical analysis and small invertebrate cataloging. Future projects will expand out into the other areas of the outdoor classroom. This new educational facility has inspired the school to invest in a biotechnology class, which will aid in the study of the microscopic components of area.

MAKING IT ALL POSSIBLE

Your Legacy Can Have an Impact

A New Year's Resolution That is Easy to Keep



Donors are making a real difference today for birds that rely on the Platte River ecosystem. There is also a way donors can create hope for the future of these birds. When you make a planned gift to the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary, you are leaving a legacy so that birds can always find a home in the prairie and children can always find new discoveries at Rowe Sanctuary.

The holiday season is a great time to consider a planned gift. If it's been more than five years since you've updated your important documents, this is a great time to do so and feel a sense of accomplishment. Major life events (such as a marriage, death, or birth in your family) can change your intentions as well. In addition to your will or living trust, you may also need to update the beneficiary designations on retirement accounts, bank and other investment accounts, and life insurance policies. Keeping copies of your beneficiary designations with your will makes your plans more clear and accessible to your executor.

Suggested 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, tax ID # 13-1624102. My gift shall be used to benefit Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary.*

We encourage you to share information about your gift intentions with our office. You will be eligible for membership in our Grinnell Legacy Society or you are able to remain anonymous if you prefer. For information contact Autumn Taddicken, Audubon Nebraska Director of Development, 308-390-3505 or ataddicken@audubon.org or visit www.audubon.planyourlegacy.org.

The Perfect Gift

Don't waste time fighting the crowds at the shopping centers this holiday season. Give the perfect gift – a future for birds.

Gift-giving is easy when you make a contribution to Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary in honor of someone.



A donation to Rowe Sanctuary is a gift of better habitat for birds, more children exploring nature, and greater protection for the Platte River. What better gift is there to give?

You can even make your donation on-line at rowe.audubon.org. Just click on Donate and mark the box to make your gift in honor of someone.



A Sense of Belonging

by Autumn Taddicken

One of the joys of working for Audubon is the opportunity to be part of a community of supporters. Just like the Sandhill Cranes returning here each spring, the people who care for and support Audubon's work on the Platte River feel a connection to this place.

When you make a gift to the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary, you are joining together with many others who also care about the future of this river and the birds that depend on it. There is so much to be done to protect our natural resources, the only limiting factor is adequate funding.

Rowe Sanctuary is a special place with a wonderful community of supporters both near and far. I feel a great sense of hope for the future when I reflect on all the people I have met through my work with Audubon. There are so many who care.

Thank you for your generosity. You are at home here at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary.

As always, we love to hear from our supporters. Please contact me to share your own stories or to discuss your personal philanthropic goals at ataddicken@audubon.org or 308-390-3505.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Rowe Adventures - New Year's Winter Walkabout JANUARY 5, 1:00-4:00 PM

Come explore our trails along the Platte River to find, even in the cold months of winter, animals and insects find ways to adapt. Families and participants of all ages will also enjoy watching the feeders from the windows of the center. Make sure to dress in layers for the hike.

Rowe Adventures - Snug as a Bug SATURDAY JANUARY 26, 1:00-4:00 PM

Discover how bugs and other critters survive the cold winter. Using magnifiers, microscopes, and mindful techniques, adults and children will probe through leaf litter and logs to discover a variety of spineless wonders wiling away the winter. Activities include a short hike and an indoor investigation.

Homeschool Thursdays

During the 2018-2019 school year, homeschool students can participate in "Homeschool Thursdays." One Thursday each month from 10:00am -12:00pm, homeschool students will explore the natural wonders Rowe Sanctuary has to offer. Remaining program dates are as follows:

Kindergarden through 3rd Grade Students:

Thursday January 10 - Mammals

Thursday April 11 - Reptiles and Amphibians

4th Grade and Up Students:

Thursday December 13 - Birds

Thursday February 7 - Mammals

Thursday May 9 - Reptiles and Amphibians

KPS No School Nature Camp

Kearney Public School teachers have in-service workshops on eight dates during the 2018-2019 school year. Students do not attend classes on those dates, but they can still explore and learn about nature at Rowe's "No School Nature Camps," from 8:30am to 3:30pm. Grade levels and camp dates are as follows:

Kindergarden through 3th Grade Students:

November 14 -Birds

January 16 - Mammals

April 10 – Reptiles and Amphibians

4th through 8th Grade Students:

December 5 -Birds

February 27 - Mammals

May 8 - Reptiles/Amphibians

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Holiday Party THURSDAY DECEMBER 6- 6:00-8:00 PM

It's time to "deck the halls" and yourself! So, break out your ugliest Christmas sweater, your elf hat with the bells, or your light up antlers and join Rowe staff and other volunteers for some holiday cheer, food, and fun! All those attending are asked to bring an hors d'oeuvre or "finger food" to share. Beverages will be provided, and yes, we will be playing a few silly holiday party games! Participation in the games is always optional, but encouraged.

Monthly Volunteer Project Days THE THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 8:30-11:30 AM

Help us complete important projects while having fun and making new friends.

December 15 • January 19 • February 16

Crane Season Volunteer Training Webinars THURSDAY AND SUNDAY, 2PM-3:30 PM

Volunteers may attend training sessions in person or via webinar. Each training topic will be offered twice. Topics to be announced at a later date. Training dates are as follows:

Training #1 – January 31 and February 3 **Training #2** – February 7 and 10 **Training #3** – February 14 and 17 **Training #4** – February 21 and 24

2019 CRANE SEASON ACTIVITIES

General Crane Tours

MARCH 1 - APRIL 7

\$35 plus taxes and fees/person

5:00 am & 5:00 pm, March 1-March 9

6:00 am & 6:00 pm, March 10-April 7

Overnight Photography Tours

MARCH 15 - APRIL 6

\$250 plus taxes and fees/blind (2 person max per blind)

4:45pm

Photographers Crane Tour

MARCH 15 - APRIL 7

\$75 plus taxes and fees/person • 6:00 am & 6:00pm

Indoor Crane Viewing

MARCH 1 - APRIL 7

\$20/person • Start time: 6:00pm

Family Night Indoor Crane Viewing

MARCH 6, 13, 20, 27 AND APRIL 3

\$10/person, children 0-4 are free

Start time: 6:00 pm

Habitat Tours WEEKENDS

March 1-3, March 8-10, March 15 & 17, March 22-24, March 29-31 April 5-6

\$10/person

1:30 pm

Crane Behavior Basics

DAILY MARCH 1-APRIL 7

\$10/person

3:30 before DST • 4:30 after DST

Crane Carnival

MARCH 16-10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

A family event full of crane-related educational activities.

Free Admission

Audubon Nebraska's 2019 Crane Festival MARCH 21-24

Bringing together hundreds of crane lovers from around the country to interact with conservationists, listen to environmental speakers and take part in incredible field trips.

Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE
\$250 registration/person

Crane River
CHRONICLES

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

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

PROTECT BIRDS AND WE PROTECT THE EARTH.

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

*Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary protects
birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow*



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

Sonceyrae Kondrotis - Office Manager

Cody Wagner - Habitat Manager

Beka Yates - Education Director

Wendy Horine - Director of Community Outreach

Audubon Nebraska

Kristal Stoner - Executive 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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Jacy Dunham

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Jennifer Martin

Steve Martindale

Brian Moody

Heidi Neverve

Jonathan Nikkila

Greg Williams

THANK YOU TO:

Cabela's for the Trail Cameras

and

Two Anonymous Donors for Tools

Rowe Wish List

FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

(40) 5x60mm Magnifying Glass Loupes - \$5 each

(10) Telescoping Inspection Mirrors - \$9 each

(30 pairs) Children's Water Shoes -
various sizes - \$12 each

FOR HABITAT PROGRAMS

(1) 3-Point Post Hole Digger - \$800

(20 pairs) Leather Work Gloves for Volunteers -
\$9 each

(6) Safety Goggles for Fire Crew - \$25 each

(3 pairs) Hip Waders - various sizes - \$70 each

Several Inexpensive Tablets -
Contact Cody for more information



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.