

# CAT PRINTS



*Wildcat Audubon Society - Serving the Nebraska Panhandle*

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## Kenitz Corner

By Alice Kenitz

August already—how can that be????? Time to begin looking forward to fall migration and some new birds. I can't help but reflect on the fact that my favorite birding time is late spring and early summer. Not even considering the weather, there are several reasons that I enjoy birding at that time. For one thing, I enjoy seeing the wildflowers. As far as the birds, I like being out when the birds are singing. In most bird species, it is the male that does the singing. He is either trying to attract a mate or establish a territory. How can you not appreciate the beautiful song of the Western Meadowlark, the bubbly exuberance of a House Wren, the familiar sounds of an American Robin? I even love to hear the mournful sounds of a Mourning Dove—it is such a 'summer sound' that reminds me of sitting under the big hackberry tree on the east side of my parents' house in Gering when I was growing up.

This summer Lee and I have been treated to the beautiful song of the Blue Grosbeak. We hadn't seen or heard many in our yard for several years, but they are treating us this year. This beautiful dark blue bird with rust-colored wing bars looks more black than blue when it is in the shade. Most birds quit singing during the heat of the day and after early July. But we can step outside during the hottest days in early August and one is singing away. Years ago I found a nice Blue Grosbeak nest in a ponderosa tree in our windbreak. As I had read, one of the building materials for that nest was snake skin. It was a beautiful and interesting nest.

Blue Grosbeak

photo by Marie Smith



We will continue to listen to and enjoy that grosbeak while we can. But soon we will be enjoying those juncos and other winter birds and I hope you will, too.

## *Bird Banding*

The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies will be hosting a public bird banding event at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center on September 9th from 7:00 am to 11:00 am (weather permitting)

They will have their mist nets set up and be banding birds behind the nature center near the deck. "Join us as we explore the fantastic world of birds! Bring your family out for an opportunity to see birds up close while learning about the bird banding process!"

For more information contact Amber Schiltz at [amber.schiltz@birdconservancy.org](mailto:amber.schiltz@birdconservancy.org) or call 308-633-1013



Brown Creeper

Bird banding has been used to study wild birds since the late 1800s. Data obtained at banding stations has greatly increased understanding of bird migration and anatomy.

Banding stations are placed in sites where birds congregate in large numbers during migration. These stopovers generally have excellent habitat that offers food and a safe place to rest. Scientists set up a series of mist nets to harmlessly trap birds. When a bird is removed from the net, its leg is fitted with a small metal band, and the bird is weighed and measured to evaluate its condition. Each band has a unique number on it so that if the bird is recaptured or found later, scientists will know when and where it was banded.

Banding stations also serve as outdoor classrooms to enhance the public's appreciation of birds. The stations provide valuable opportunities for volunteers and students to gain experience in scientific field techniques.

In the last 25-plus years, the Bird Conservancy has banded more than 100,000 birds.

## **Wildcat Weekends**

The Wildcat Hills Nature Center is pleased to offer Wildcat Weekends! A variety of programs will be offered at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center on the second Saturday of the month (\*unless otherwise noted). Best of all, most programs are FREE!

A valid 2017 Nebraska State Park permit is required. For more information about these events or to register (when applicable), contact the Nature Center at 308-436-3777 or [ngpc.wildcat.hills@nebraska.gov](mailto:ngpc.wildcat.hills@nebraska.gov)

### **September 9, 2017 at 9:00am MDT**

#### *Feathered Friends*

Uncover the birds that call the Wildcat Hills home! We will learn about research being done in the area, common migratory birds and even take a short hike. Bring your hiking shoes and be prepared to take flight!

### **October 14, 2017 at 7:00 pm MDT**

#### *Howl in the Hills Night Hike*

Experience the Wildcat Hills like never before, at night! Discover all the creatures that go bump in the night during our hike! It is sure to be a 'howling' good time! Please bring a flashlight, hiking shoes and a sense of adventure. Please pre-register by October 6, 2017 for this event.

### **\*\*Friday, November 3, 2017 at 7:00pm MST**

#### *Wildlife and Watercolors*

Come along and show your artistic side! Try your hand at watercolor painting, while enjoying nature at the Wildcat Hills. Please pre-register by October 27, 2017 for this event at 308-436-3777. Cost for this program will be \$10 to cover the cost of supplies. Light refreshments will be served.

### **December 9, 2017 at 9:00am MST**

#### *Nature's Gifts: Decorations from the Great Outdoors*

Come and help us create garland feeders, bird feeders and fun nature ornaments that will dress up the Nature Center and your own homes for the winter season!

## Calendar of Events 2017

### September 2-5 (Labor Day Weekend)

**Bird Banding** open to the public at Chadron State Park (not an Audubon field trip)

### September 2, 2017

**Field Trip to Sowbelly Canyon and Gilbert Baker WMA** in Sioux County. Meet at RCI, 27th & Ave I at 6:00am. This will be an all day trip, bring a sack lunch.

### September 16, 2017

**General Meeting and Program** at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm. Program will be Ernest Griffiths talking about Honey Bees and honey production.

### September 23, 2017

**Scotts Bluff County Fall Bird Count.** Meet at Arby's at 7am, we should be back in town by 1:00 and may go out again in the afternoon.

### October 14, 2017

**Waterfowl and Cranes Field Trip.** Meet at Arby's at 8am. We will bird the lakes and ponds looking for migrating water fowl and fields around the lakes to look for Sandhill Crane We should be back to town around 1pm

### October 21, 2017

**General Meeting and Program** at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm. Program will be a presentation by George Zieman on the Paleo Indians of the High Plains.

*Our meetings, field trips and events are free and open to the public*

### November 18, 2017

**General Meeting and Program** at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm.

Program will be by Anthony Mason, Riverside Zoo director. He will be telling us about bats.

### December 2017 or January 2018 TBA

**Scotts Bluff County Christmas Bird Count.**

Meet at Arby's at 7:00am. Count sites will be assigned at this time. This is an all day count but help is appreciated for any amount of time. We will be back at Arby's around 1:00 for lunch then go back out in the afternoon. Feeder watchers within the count circle are also needed.

For more information contact Alice Kenitz at [akenitz@prairieweb.com](mailto:akenitz@prairieweb.com) or 308-436-2959

### We do not have a meeting in December

### January 20, 2018

**General Meeting and Program** at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm. Program to be announced

### February 17, 2018

**General Meeting and Program** at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm. Program to be announced

### March 17, 2018

**General Meeting and Program** at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm. Program by Jody Lamp on the History of Agriculture in Nebraska

### April 21, 2018

**General Meeting and Program** at the Regional West Medical Center South Plaza meeting room at 7:30 pm. Program to be announced

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