

CAT PRINTS



Wildcat Audubon Society - Serving the Nebraska Panhandle

Officers 2020

Co-Presidents

Dr. Don Gentry
 Meredyth Gentry
 308-436-2495
 dmngentry@gmail.com

Vice President -Programs

Tim Lane
 308-586-1277
 tclane63@yahoo.com

Secretary -Field Trips

Alice Kenitz
 308-436-2959
 akenitz@prairieweb.com

Treasurer-Editor -Field Trips

Kathy DeLara
 308-631-2792
 renosmom@charter.net

Board of Directors

Chuck & Donna Davey
 308-632-5767
 donna@eddavey.com

Rod & Marie Smith
 308-631-0674
 mlou_smith@yahoo.com

Gwen Smith
 308-631-9243
 franchlife@vistabeam.com

www.WildcatAudubon.org

[www.facebook.com/
WildcatAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/WildcatAudubon)

Kenitz Corner

By Alice Kenitz

A common question that birdwatchers get is, “What is your favorite bird?” For most of us that is an impossible question to answer. But I decided to figure out my favorite bird for 2020 (so far). The easy answer is Eastern Screech-Owl seen in Hubbard’s Gap south of McGrew. It was very cute—sitting in the opening of a hole in a tree.

They are cavity nesters and frequently spend daylight hours in a hole in a tree or even in a nesting box.

There are three species of Screech-Owl in North America—eastern, western, and whiskered. They are best identified by voice. Until recently they were all considered one species. To make it more confusing, the eastern has three color morphs—gray, brown, and red. Most of the screech-owls we see here are gray morph Eastern Screech-Owls.



Hubbard’s Gap Screech-owl by Kathy DeLara

Eastern Screech-Owls are here all year long. We seldom see them because they are very nocturnal. They are about 8.5 inches long with a wingspan of about 20 inches and a weight of about 6 oz. The female is slightly larger than the male. Calls are a soft, mournful whinny, and a tremulous whistle that falls down the scale. Both sexes make the call. Birds will come readily to an imitation of their call.

Nesting is in a tree cavity or a bird box. No real nest is made. There are 4-5 eggs that are incubated about 26 days. The young fly at about 28 days after hatching. The female does most of the incubating. The male feeds her and may often be found near the female in the nest cavity.

Eastern Screech-Owls like to bathe and can be found bathing in a backyard birdbath. They have a varied diet ranging from small mammals to birds to insects to snakes and amphibians to fish. I read of a bird that flew down the chimney of a home and attacked and killed a canary in a cage!!!

Stay safe and good birding to all!!

Birds expanding their range

Mississippi Kite

A pair of Mississippi Kites are nesting in Scottsbluff this summer. Their normal summer range is the south eastern United States and they winter in central South America. The first ones that were reported in Nebraska was in Ogallala in 1991 where they have been every year since. In 2012 a pair were nesting in North Platte and the numbers have increased since.

They are still rare in the Nebraska Panhandle. One was seen in Sheridan and Deuel Counties in 2018 and another was spotted in Sheridan County in May of this year.

The first time they were seen in Scottsbluff was in June –July 2011 when a group of 7 were found. No nesting evidence was seen and no others had been reported until this year.

This year there is a group of 4 birds, 2 adults and 2 1st year birds. Kites live and hunt in groups and sometimes young from the previous year will help raise the young.

One newly hatched kite was seen in the nest this past week. If all goes well it should fledge in about 30 days.

Update: A second young one was seen a couple days later.

Kites eat insects, rodents and other small critters. For more information you can check out the links below.

[More about Mississippi Kites](#)

[Birds of Nebraska Online](#)



Scottsbluff Mississippi Kite by Marie Smith

Lesser Goldfinch

Lesser Goldfinches are a west/southwest species that have been seen off and on in the panhandle for a number of years. The first state record was in 1984 but only a half dozen were seen between then and 2000. After that the numbers have increased and they are seen in varying numbers each year. Recently breeding has been recorded and the numbers should continue to increase.



Lesser Goldfinches by Marie Smith

The Lesser Goldfinches have two color types, the black-backed and the green-backed. One of each is shown in this photo that was taken in the wildcat hills. The black-backed is considered a southern bird and the green-backed more western.

This year a pair has been seen regularly at the feeders at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center where they enjoy nyjer thistle and black-oil sunflower seeds.

[Birds of Nebraska Online - Lesser Goldfinch](#)

Calendar of Events 2020

Letter from our presidents;

To all members of the Wildcat Audubon Society,

With these uncertain times we hope that you are doing well. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly changed our style of living. We have not been able to have our meetings since everything has been closed down.

The Board has been looking at the near future and because it is uncertain times, we felt it would be unwise to have our annual picnic to be held in August and have any programs thru the fall. We have decided to cancel these events, review how the pandemic is going later on in the year and hope to restart our programs in January.

We hope you all stay well and we hope we will see you in the future for our programs.

Sincerely,
Donald and Meredyth Gentry

As of now we will plan to have the following bird counts this fall.

September 26, 2020

Scotts Bluff County Fall Bird Count

Meet at RCI's parking lot, 27th & Ave I in Scottsbluff at 7:00 am. We will count birds within the county and should be back around 1:00pm

October 10, 2020

Waterfowl & Cranes Field Trip to local lakes, ponds and surrounding fields.

Meet at RCI's parking lot, 27th & Ave I Scottsbluff at 8:00am. We should be back around 1:00pm

December 14, 2020 (Monday)

Scottsbluff Christmas Bird Count

Meeting location will be announced, we will meet at 7am.

This is an all day count but we need help for any amount of time you have available. Feeder watchers are also needed within the circle. Map of CBC circle can be viewed on our website

WildcatAudubon.org

[Map](#)

Contact Alice Kenitz for more information on field trips or the bird counts.
Call 308-436-2959 or email her at akenitz@prairieweb.com

Join the Wildcat Audubon Society

Membership dues are only \$5.00 per year and due in January

Your dollars help pay for CatPrints newsletter, Public Education and other projects through out the year

**If you would like to continue to receive the newsletter by mail please send
in this form with your membership payment.**

**If you want to have it sent to you by email, send an email with "CatPrints Newsletter"
in subject line to Kathy DeLara at renoismom@charter.net or return the form.**



Wildcat Audubon Society
Membership 2020 or Cat Prints Subscription by Mail

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

**There is no charge for the Cat Prints Subscription by email
I would like to receive my newsletter by email _____**

If you would like to become a local member send \$5.00 to
Wildcat Audubon % Kathy DeLara
170188 Spring Creek Rd, Mitchell, NE 69357

NL-0720

Wildcat Audubon Society
c/o Kathy DeLara
170188 Spring Creek Road
Mitchell, NE 69357-5319

