

# CAT PRINTS



*Wildcat Audubon Society - Serving the Nebraska Panhandle*

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## Kenitz Corner

By Alice Kenitz

Most avid birdwatchers these days have lists. There is the LIFE list (all those species identified in your lifetime). Then the STATE list (all those identified in a certain state and there could be 50 such lists). An important activity in Nebraska right now has to do with COUNTY lists and involves trying to identify at least 125 species in each of Nebraska's 93 counties. A reverse of that is to see how many species you can see in all of the 93 counties. How about a BATHROOM list (all the species identified from your bathroom window). Or the TV list (all the species identified by voice from whatever TV shows you watch). For me, like most birders, the LIFE list is the most important. Second, for me is the YARD list. I've lived in the middle of a native grass pasture for almost 50 years. Granted, we've modified the habitat a bit with a blue grass lawn and a number of trees (both native and non-native species).

So it is a pretty big deal for me to see a new yard bird. On July 18 I heard, then saw a Northern Bobwhite. It has been more than 10 years since I have seen this member of the quail family in Scotts Bluff County. Most of my encounters with bobwhite have been closer to the river in brushier habitat. So I was excited by my recent sighting. Since the initial sighting, I have seen at least two birds several times. My neighbor tells me he saw a small covey (6 to 8 birds) of the quail several months ago.

Northern Bobwhite prefer a brushy habitat—an 'edge' area. They are small ground-dwelling birds that can fly short distances but prefer to run or walk. They are about 9.75" long and weigh about 6 oz. (pheasants weigh about 2.5 lb.) Both males and females have white throats and a white stripe above the eye from the beak to the neck. Their song is a whistled bob-WHITE which is sometimes imitated by other species.

Food is about 2/3 plant material. Nest is on the ground and may be arched over by grasses, thus concealing the eggs. They can lay up to 30 eggs in a season and sometimes more than one hen will lay eggs in a particular nest. They often roost in a circle, with tails toward the center. They can share warmth that way and, if danger approaches, the formation explodes outward—startling the predator or human!

But my real sighting for the summer has been the moose I saw about ½ mile from home. But that is another story!!!!

## Interesting Bird Sightings

A Black-chinned Hummingbird and an Anna's Hummingbird were both seen in Rod and Marie Smith's yard in Gering in mid-June. These two hummingbirds are south-west species and have just began showing up in Nebraska in the past few years.



Black-Chinned Hummingbird—Marie Smith Photo

Ross Silcock, Nebraska Bird Record Committee and co-author of Birds of Nebraska and Birds of Nebraska Online had this to say about the Black-chinned Hummingbird.

*“BCHU is actually spreading north on the western great plains as a breeder and so would be expected in summer. More or less the western equivalent of Ruby Throated Hummingbird.*

*I think numbers will continue to increase.”*

So keep an eye out in the summer for this species.

A male Northern Cardinal has been in Kathy DeLara's yard in rural Mitchell this spring and summer, with intermittent visits from a female.

Alice Kenitz saw a Northern Bobwhite in her yard south of Gering a few times in July.

A Scarlett Tanager was in a yard north east of Scottsbluff for a few days in late May/early June.

A pair of Northern Mockingbirds where in Alan and Gwen Smith's yard on Wrights Gap Rd.

A Broad-winged Hawk was spotted off Old Stage Hill Road in May

A Ruddy Turnstone was at the wetland just west of Minatare in May.

Hummingbird migration has been slow this summer with a small number of Rufous, Broad-tailed and Calliope Hummingbirds seen. After last years record year it's been disappointing.

## Fall Bird Banding

Join Bird Conservancy of the Rockies this fall at our bird banding stations! Banding stations are located at Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area and Chadron State Park from August 26-October 11. From Tuesday through Saturday mornings throughout the banding period.

Bird Conservancy's bird banders will be capturing, evaluating, and fitting each caught bird with a unique band. Members of the public are welcome to visit the stations while they are operating, or attend a Banding Station Open House! Our banding stations also involve daily field trips from surrounding schools. These field trips give students the opportunity to see birds in the hand and to learn about bird adaptations, conservation issues, behaviors, habitat requirements, and migration patterns.

To register for a banding station field trip or to learn more about the banding stations in western Nebraska, please contact Chaley Jensen, [chaley.jensen@birdconservancy.org](mailto:chaley.jensen@birdconservancy.org).

### Upcoming Events

September 6-7: Chadron State Park BioBlitz (6pm Friday - 12pm Saturday)

September 14: Wildcat Hills Banding Station Open House (8am - 12pm)

September 28: Chadron State Park Banding Station Open House (8am - 12pm)

## *Calendar of Events Fall/Winter 2019*

**Please notice that we have changed the location of our picnic and the monthly meetings/programs.**

**The meetings will be held at the new Platte Valley Bank Community Room at the corner of Platte Valley Drive and 11th Ave in Scottsbluff. This is just south west of the main bank.**

**The main entrance and parking lot is on the south side of the building.**

***August 11, 2019***

**Wildcat Audubon Annual Picnic**

5:00pm at the shelter in \***Legion Park** in Gering (NEW LOCATION)  
Bring a covered dish and table service. Meat and drinks will be furnished.

***September 22, 2019 (Sunday)***

**Cascade Falls/Cascade Spring Field Trip**  
(South Dakota)

Meet at RCI, 27<sup>th</sup> & Ave I, Scottsbluff at 6am, bring a sack lunch and drinks. We will be back late afternoon.

***September 21, 2019***

**General Meeting and program**, 7:30 pm at the Platte Valley Bank Community Room. Program will be "Nebraska Citizen Science" Join NGPC Watchable Wildlife biologist Alie Mayes for a presentation about citizen science. Learn about what citizen science is, how NGPC is using citizen science to learn more about at-risk species, and how you can get involved with a variety of citizen science projects on both a state and national level.

***September 28, 2019***

**Scotts Bluff County Fall Bird Count**

Meet at Arby's in Scottsbluff at 7:00 am. We will count birds within the county and should be back around 1:00pm for lunch and may go back out in the afternoon.

***October 12, 2019***

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

Meet at Arby's in Scottsbluff at 8:00am. We should be back around 1:00pm

***October 19, 2019***

**General Meeting and program**, 7:30 pm at the Platte Valley Bank Community Room. Vance Nelson, curator at Fort Robinson, will have a presentation about the history of Fort Rob.

***November 8, 2019 (Friday)***

**Scottsbluff and Gering Sewer Lagoons Field Trip** (Note \*this is a Friday field trip)

Meet at Arby's in Scottsbluff at 8am. We will car pool to the treatment plants.

***November 16, 2019***

**General Meeting and program**, 7:30 pm at the Platte Valley Bank Community Room. Program will be "Bird is the Word" Ever wonder how some birds got their crazy names? What is Ferruginous and who exactly is the Cooper in Cooper's Hawk? Join Jason "the Birdnerd" St. Sauver, Audubon Nebraska's Director of Education & Outreach, for an evening of bird facts about bird names based on color, anatomy, and more.

**December 14, 2019**

**Scottsbluff Christmas Bird Count**

(tentative date, this may be changed)  
Contact Alice Kenitz for more information call 308-436-2959 or email her at [akenitz@prairieweb.com](mailto:akenitz@prairieweb.com)

We can always use additional help with this count, for any amount of time. We also need feeder watchers within the count circle which can be viewed on our website under the maps link. [www.wildcataudubon.org](http://www.wildcataudubon.org)

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

## *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

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