








# 2015-2016 Annual Report





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# The Why of Our Work

Audubon is working in Nebraska and around the world because we care about the future of this beautiful world, the animals, and people that live in it. Everyone's lives will be diminished if we lose our wild places and creatures. Many birds are in serious trouble; rivers and streams need care. Grasslands of the Great Plains are a remnant of what they once were; animals that rely on grasslands need caring stewards. Audubon engages people with personal experiences in nature to promote a love of our natural world that translates into hope.

You are what hope looks like to the wild places and all the creatures in them.



## Mission Statements

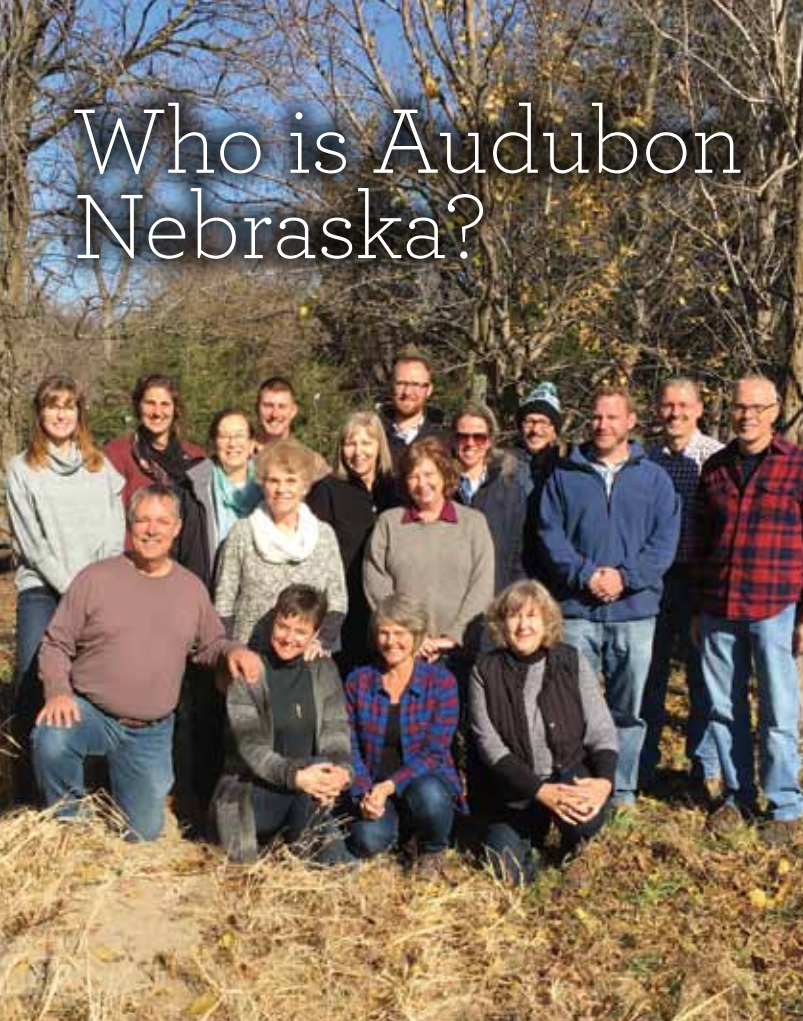
The mission of **Audubon Nebraska** is to conserve and restore our state's natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

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.

The mission of **Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center** is to conserve and restore the tallgrass prairie ecosystem including birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.



# Who is Audubon Nebraska?



## Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Stewardship Board

Mari Lane Gewecke, *Chair*  
 Jeff Jewell, *Chair-Elect*  
 Deb Dahab  
 Judy Dougherty  
 Lana Flagtwet  
 Stephen Gage  
 Jeff Hagaman  
 Bruce Johnson  
 Jenni Lesoing-Lucs  
 Marilyn Moore  
 Cindy Morris  
 Cindy Rose  
 Sam Seever  
 Daniel Semrad  
 Lyle Sittler  
 Scott Stuckey  
 Tom Tallman  
 Larry Williams  
 Barbara Wright-Chollet

## Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary Stewardship Board

Ed Berglund, *Chair*  
 Charles Bicak, *Vice Chair*  
 Leslie Abegglen  
 Rob Ahlschwede  
 Susan Ahlschwede  
 Kathryn Benzel



Stan Dart  
 Jacy Dunham  
 Ben Hirschfeld  
 Carol Lindstrom  
 Jennifer Martin  
 Brian Moody  
 Greg Williams

## Audubon Nebraska Stewardship Board

(under formation,  
 current as of August 2016)

Trixie Schmidt, *Chair*  
 Rich Vierk, *Chair-Elect*  
 Mary Daugherty  
 Mike Forsberg  
 Dan Lindstrom  
 Lisa Smith  
 Denton Weichman

## Audubon Nebraska Staff

Marian Langan, *Executive Director*  
 Melissa Filipi, *Director of Philanthropy*  
 Carey Collingham, *Corporate and Foundation Coordinator*  
 Cindy Houlden, *Donor Relations Coordinator*  
 Autumn Taddicken, *Project Manager*

## Based at Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary:

Bill Taddicken, *Director*  
 Keanna Leonard, *Education Director*  
 Andrew Pierson, *Director of Conservation*  
 Kent Skaggs, *Operations Manager*  
 Anne Winkel, *Outreach Coordinator*  
 Sharon Ingram, *Nature Store Manager*  
 Carol Haussler, *Janitor/Maintenance Technician*  
 Tess Bruner, *Education Coordinator (seasonal position)*  
 Cody Wagner, *Habitat Technician (seasonal position)*

## Based at Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center:

Glynnis Collins, *Director*  
 Jason St. Sauver, *Community Education Director*  
 Kevin Poague, *Operations Manager*  
 Ed Hubbs, *Habitat Program Manager*  
 Amy Plettner, *Caretaker*  
 Matt Harvey, *Program Associate*



# From Our Leaders



## Hope for the Future

As I write this, I'm looking out on the plantings in my own yard, reflecting on the hard work, the long hours invested in creating this natural oasis outside my window. The "blood, sweat, and tears" that went into my own yard pale in comparison to the efforts of our Audubon staff and volunteers. Their labors help restore and maintain the scenic wonders of our native tallgrass prairie, of the meandering braided channels of our Platte River, of the beauty along our Niobrara River, and the splendor of our Sandhills.

I am amazed when I reflect on what we have accomplished, and filled with hope when I think of what we WILL accomplish in the coming year, thanks to you. Without our supporters, none of this is possible!

Trixie Schmidt  
Stewardship Board Chair  
Audubon Nebraska



## Our Common Bond

As a past Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Stewardship Board member and the incoming Board Chair for Audubon Nebraska, I have seen first-hand the fruits of our labors. I have seen a beautiful unplowed prairie become a destination for many in our community and surrounding areas. I have seen what started as a small group of visitors and staff in a little farmhouse become an incredible wildlife migration drawing 20,000 people from around the world.

I have seen these natural spaces bring people together across the miles, across the cultures, across many generations. This common bond brings us together as a community as well. A community destined to preserve our natural and cultural heritage for the future.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey!

Rich Vierk  
Stewardship Board Chair-Elect  
Audubon Nebraska



Photo credit: Valerie Cuppens



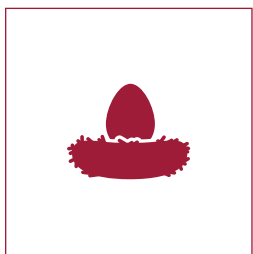
### Bobolink

*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

Current summer range of Bobolink in North America, as shown by the outline, compared to the projected range in 2080, illustrated by the shaded area. Audubon's climate model projects only one-fifth of their current range will remain stable, and the range noticeably shifts to the north. If grasslands are restored in the new projected suitable habitat areas, the Bobolink may be able to ride the wave of a shifting climate.

*"If you take care of the birds, you take care of most of the big problems in the world."*

– Dr. Thomas Lovejoy,  
Professor of Environmental Science  
and Policy, George Mason University



# Conservation Strategies

Birds connect people. By finding conservation solutions for environmental challenges like climate change and America's disappearing prairies and green space, we can enhance the quality of life for our communities. Together, we can make a difference for birds, wildlife, and our people.

More information on Audubon's Climate Change research can be found at <http://www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-change>.

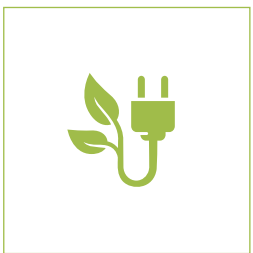




Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center and Rowe Sanctuary continue their citizen science projects such as monarch butterfly monitoring. In addition to measuring milkweed plant density, volunteers gather to search for eggs, caterpillars, and adults to help learn more about monarch butterflies. The more we know about these incredible insects, the more we can help them on their migratory path.



Photo credit: Gordon Warrick



# Climate Change

Climate change is a bird issue. Shrinking and shifting habitats threaten nearly half of North American birds. Together we care for the places that birds need now and will need in a climate-changed future.

Audubon uses Geographic Information Systems at every level of the organization, from mapping the Christmas Bird Count to monitoring the effects of management activities on local birds at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. Staff and volunteers collect data on Audubon properties and across the state through citizen-science projects to guide future habitat management decisions and monitor the effect of climate on species in Nebraska.



In 2015, Rowe Sanctuary staff, stewardship board members, volunteers, partners, and community leaders participated in an intensive site planning process. They reviewed Audubon's efforts and outcomes during our 40-plus years of history on the Platte River, reflecting on how far our work has come as well as the opportunities that lay before us. What emerged was a 50-year comprehensive vision for Rowe Sanctuary that responds to global climate change. This plan for Rowe Sanctuary secures our position as a Globally Important Bird Area stronghold and illuminates what a "century of conservation" on the Platte River could look like.



Before



After



# Water

Over the past five years, water availability, quality, and management have emerged as increasingly urgent environmental challenges for people, birds, and communities. Fresh water provides drinking water, irrigation for crops, and power for communities, as well as vital habitat for billions of birds. Water quality and quantity are paramount to the survival of birds.

**The Platte River is a working river, in a working landscape. Over the years, our demands on the river have depleted water flows, allowing trees to encroach on open channels and invasive species to thrive, choking out the natural habitat. Through the work of Audubon and partner agencies and organizations, we are doing what nature used to do every spring. We are clearing the river channels, improving, expanding, and protecting this stretch of the Platte River ecosystem to manage wide, braided, sandy channels, free of invasive species and trees. The result of our work? Audubon has the highest incidence of Whooping Crane use on the Platte River. This past spring, 11 Whooping Cranes were spotted on Rowe Sanctuary during the migration in a single evening! With your help, we are creating a safe oasis along their migratory path to aid in recovery efforts.**





In June, Marian Langan, Audubon Nebraska state director, and Andrew Pierson, Rowe Sanctuary director of conservation, joined 130 ranchers and birders for a joint event in the Sandhills. The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition Summer Grazing and Birding Tour included stops at the Eatinger Ranch, the Reed Hamilton Ranch, and the Dailey Angus Ranch. The tour provided an opportunity for area ranchers to demonstrate their rotational grazing strategies, which improve grasslands' health for cattle, and learn how those same strategies also benefit grassland birds, which can prevent further decline of these species. The day-long program included the chance to learn more about the plants and birds native to these ranches and ended with a dinner in Thedford, Nebraska.



# Working Lands

Working lands are central to our economic and environmental health, and to the health of birds. Audubon works with policy leaders, landowners, land managers, and private industry to encourage land management in ways that support a sustainable future for the birds while maintaining the economic productivity of the land. This is one of our best hopes for conservation of North American grasslands.

**This event was the result of partnerships between Audubon Nebraska, Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, Sandhills Task Force, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Center for Rural Affairs, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Nebraska Cattlemen, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Ducks Unlimited, Sandhills Scenic Byway, Nebraska Environmental Trust, and Bird Conservancy of the Rockies.**





Did you know that Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary is a Globally Important Bird Area? Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center is an Important Bird Area as well. These critical habitats, and great birdwatching opportunities, are in your "backyard."

We are proud to host one of the longest running wildlife celebrations, Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival. Kearney, Nebraska, provides a central location for bird and nature enthusiasts to gather for this four-day festival. Attendees enjoy a variety of field trips to bird watching sites, join others in educational presentations, and enjoy social luncheons and dinners where they can share their passion with others. The 2016 festival featured keynote presentations from Dr. Paul Johnsgard and famous wildlife photographer Tom Mangelsen. Dates are set for next year, March 16-19, 2017. Visit [NebraskaCraneFestival.org](http://NebraskaCraneFestival.org) for details.

With thousands of people coming from around the world to witness the internationally celebrated annual migration of over 600,000 Sandhill Cranes, neighboring communities provide a host of amenities. Local communities welcome this migration of people as much as they do the migration of the cranes!

Rowe Sanctuary and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center host a wide variety of community outreach events every year. This past year, we welcomed visitors to Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center for The Big Event (a national day of service, encouraging people to give back to local communities through volunteering), for Firefly Picnics, and even a Dragonfly Festival. A new event this year, the Lunar Eclipse Party, brought people to Rowe Sanctuary for an evening on the Platte River, under the stars and, naturally, the moon. From guided nature walks to citizen science projects, there are opportunities for everyone to enjoy a personal experience with nature.



# Bird-Friendly Communities

We work to improve landscapes across the United States by supporting local initiatives in our local communities. Audubon's chapters, centers, volunteer leaders, and partners are present and active, promoting stewardship of Important Bird Areas, use of native plants, and bird-friendly building practices. The strength of our network comes from local and authentic action.

## Important Bird Areas

Audubon is leading the way to protect iconic places and the birds that depend on them through the Important Bird Areas program. This program identifies areas that are most important for maintaining bird populations, and helps focus conservation efforts at these sites.





**Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center partnered with six Community Learning Centers in Lincoln, Nebraska, to host seven weeks of summer camps. For many of the youth in these programs, this is their first experience connecting with nature. Rowe Sanctuary celebrated the 20th year of summer camps this year. Many of these young “campers” come back to serve as peer leaders when they are older. These camps are incredibly popular. Watch our websites for information on next year’s summer camps!**

Embracing the importance of clean water, Aveda Salons across Nebraska raise money through Earth Month promotions and events to support clean water initiatives across our state. Earth Month activities culminated with the 2016 Aveda Catwalk for Water at the Pella Event Center, where all fashion items were created with recycled materials, and all proceeds benefit Audubon Nebraska’s clean water efforts. Audubon Nebraska honors the top Aveda fundraisers with an outdoor excursion to provide insight into our work for the environment.



# In Our Communities

At Audubon, we connect, energize, and lead the most effective conservation network in the country to increase our impact. Our ability and our success is directly connected to the dedication, energy, and creativity of our incredible network of chapters, centers, volunteer leaders, and partners.





Thanks to a partnership with Ducks Unlimited and the Minden and Gibbon Public Schools, Rowe Sanctuary has installed Wood Duck nesting boxes on the sanctuary. Wood Ducks are beautiful and native to Nebraska. Their number is believed to be limited in many areas because there are not enough natural nesting cavities. The project is not only ensuring Wood Ducks a place to raise their young, it is also teaching the next generation about the importance of the world around them. They are learning conservation values while they work on this outstanding project.



Audubon Nebraska continues to work with our local chapters across the state. We are honored to work with Audubon Society of Omaha, Wachiska Audubon Society in southeast Nebraska, Big Bend Audubon Society in central Nebraska, and Wildcat Audubon Society in western Nebraska. Their work building support in communities across the state is instrumental in achieving the goal of extending our conservation reach, together.





# Audubon Supporters

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*We would also like to thank  
all of our donors, at every  
level, for their support.  
We are fortunate to say, there  
simply are too many of you  
to list here!*

*We sincerely apologize if your  
name doesn't appear on this  
list and should. Please contact  
our office so we can correct  
our records.*



# Audubon Nebraska Financials

## Revenues, Gains, and Other Support

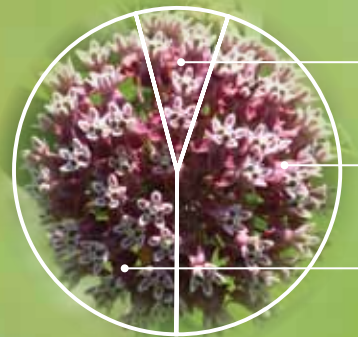
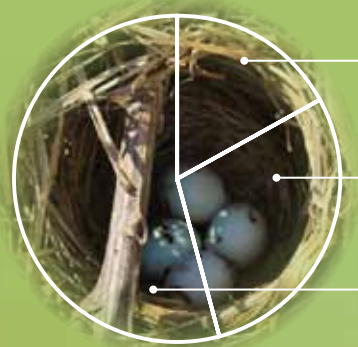
Gifts, Grants, Bequests .....	\$ 830,908
Investment Income .....	259,930
Earned Income and Other Revenue .....	437,913

**Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support . . \$ 1,528,751**

## Expenses

Education and Community Outreach .....	\$ 687,938
Habitat Management .....	703,225
Advocacy .....	137,588

**Total Expenses .....\$ 1,528,751**



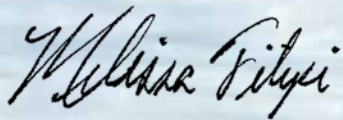
To support a cause that has been important in your life, please consider a gift to Audubon Nebraska, Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary, or Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. You can honor a family member by making a tribute gift in your will or other estate plans. The Grinnell Legacy Society honors our members and friends who have generously included Audubon in their estate plans. If you would like to learn how you can leave a legacy, or if you have already included Audubon in your plans, please contact us (information on page 15).



# You Are Hope

As we prepared this annual report, I had an opportunity to reflect on all that we, together, accomplished in the last twelve months. Without our volunteers and donors, none of this could have happened. You truly have made a difference. You have brought incredible outdoor educational experiences to children, teens, and adults. You have made our centers a destination for visitors, showcasing Nebraska and our natural heritage. You have provided a sanctuary for our birds and wildlife. You provide hope—hope for the future, hope for our birds, hope for the next generation.

We have come so far, and we have so far to go.  
Join us on this amazing path!



Melissa Filipi  
*Director of Philanthropy*  
*Audubon Nebraska*



## How You Can Help

- Become a volunteer. There are many opportunities available that can fit into any schedule, interests, skills, or time.
- Tell your friends and family about us. Raising awareness of our work opens many doors and introduces a new group of volunteers, donors, and supporters to our mission.
- Donate. We rely on the generous support of our donors for the work that we do. All money raised here, stays here.





# Audubon Directory



## National Audubon Society

225 Varick Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10014  
212-979-3000  
[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)



## Audubon NEBRASKA

11700 SW 100 Street  
Denton, NE 68339  
402-797-2301  
[ne.audubon.org](http://ne.audubon.org)



## IAIN NICOLSON Audubon CENTER AT ROWE SANCTUARY

44450 Elm Island Road  
Gibbon, NE 68840  
308-468-5282  
[rowe.audubon.org](http://rowe.audubon.org)



## SPRING CREEK PRAIRIE Audubon CENTER

11700 SW 100 Street  
PO Box 117  
Denton, NE 68339  
402-797-2301  
[springcreekprairie.audubon.org](http://springcreekprairie.audubon.org)

## Audubon Society of Omaha

PO Box 3542  
Omaha, NE 68103  
402-445-4138  
Nebraska Bird Line 402-721-5487  
[audubon-omaha.org](http://audubon-omaha.org)

## Big Bend Audubon Society

PO Box 1575  
Kearney, NE 68848  
[www.audubon.org/chapters/big-bend-audubon-society](http://www.audubon.org/chapters/big-bend-audubon-society)

## Wachiska Audubon Society

4547 Calvert Street, Suite 10  
Lincoln, NE 68506  
402-486-4846  
[office@wachiskaaudubon.org](mailto:office@wachiskaaudubon.org)  
[www.wachiskaaudubon.org](http://www.wachiskaaudubon.org)

## Wildcat Audubon Society

170188 Spring Creek Road  
Mitchell, NE 69357  
[www.wyoneb.net/-delara/WildcatAudubon](http://www.wyoneb.net/-delara/WildcatAudubon)





Audubon Nebraska is a proud member of Community Services Fund, an organization of nonprofit agencies improving the quality of life throughout Nebraska by preserving resources, expanding knowledge, encouraging creativity, and protecting rights. Look for Community Services Fund in your next worksite giving campaign to designate your donation to Audubon Nebraska. Donations may also be designated for Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary or Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center by contacting [nebraska@audubon.org](mailto:nebraska@audubon.org). For more information about Community Services Fund and worksite giving, visit [www.CommunityServicesFund.org](http://www.CommunityServicesFund.org).

