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NOU Spring Field Days and Annual Meeting, Kimball, May 20–22, 2016

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NOU Spring Field Days and Annual Meeting
Kimball, May 20-22, 2016

by Janis Paseka

The annual meeting of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union was held at the Kimball Event Center on May 20-22, 2016, and was organized by Robin Harding and Betty Grenon. Although it was a long drive for most, 75 birders attended, including guests from Iowa, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado and Arkansas.

On Friday evening, President Dan Leger presented a Michael Forsberg photograph of Burrowing Owls to Betty Grenon in appreciation for her many years of service as Treasurer. The evening program continued with a presentation by Angela Dwyer and Larry Snyder of the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, formerly known as the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. The Bird Conservancy and Nebraska Prairie Partners are responsible for implementing the Mountain Plover nest protection program. They began counting Mountain Plovers in 2001 and later created a nest incentive program with modest payments to landowners who are willing to have plover nests in their agricultural fields marked with stakes to prevent tillage of that area of the field. Approximately 5% of the total population of 12,500 Mountain Plovers nests in Nebraska and the species is listed as "Near Threatened" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The birds often construct two nest scrapes. The female lays a clutch of eggs in one, leaves the male to incubate that one, and then goes on to lay another clutch in the second scrape, which she then incubates.

Field trips on Saturday and Sunday morning were led by Kathy DeLara, Bill Flack, Dave Heidt, Wayne Mollhoff, and Don and Janis Paseka. Destinations included Gotte Park in Kimball, Oliver Reservoir, Bushnell, I-80 Exit 1, the Pine Bluffs area in Wyoming, Mountain Plover nests south of Kimball, Golden Eagle nest south of Potter, Hackberry Canyon, Pumpkin Creek, Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area, Scottsbluff sewage lagoons, and Wright's Gap Road.

Sheri Williamson of the Southeast Arizona Bird Observatory, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the birds of southeastern Arizona, was our Saturday evening speaker. Sheri is the author of *A Field Guide to Hummingbirds of North America* in the Peterson Field Guide Series. She presented a general overview of hummingbird information, including facts about nest building using spider silk and lichens for camouflage, use of tail feathers to make sounds, directional iridescence of feathers, pests affecting hummingbirds including species-specific lice that get under the feathers of the gorget, and the birds' ability to go into torpor, dropping from their normal 104° F body temperature to 70° F. Her presentation included photos of some of the 360 worldwide species of hummingbirds, including one Nebraska oddity. This was a Ruby-throated x Broad-tailed Hummingbird photographed by Juanita Whittecar, who was in attendance at the meeting, at her eastern Dawes Co residence in the summer of 2014. This is only

the second documentation of an inter-generic hybrid involving a Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

At the brief business meeting, the minutes of the last meeting were read and the locations of the next meetings were announced: fall 2016 in Burwell and spring 2017 in Auburn. The election of officers for the coming year was held: Dan Leger, President; Robin Harding, Vice President; Ruth Stearns, Secretary; Betty Grenon, Treasurer; Jan Johnson, Director; Anita Breckbill, Librarian; and Janis Paseka, Editor.

Total species count for the weekend meeting was 156. Larry Snyder pointed out nesting Mountain Plovers to multiple groups and followed that up with pasture tours to see Chestnut-sided and McCown's Longspurs and a walkabout on his farmstead to look for passerines. Other highlights of the meeting were 15 duck species, White-faced Ibis, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Common Tern, White-throated Swift, Gray and Dusky Flycatchers, Green-tailed Towhee, Brewer's Sparrow and Lesser Goldfinch.

NOU Annual Meeting - Kimball

	Kimball	Cheyenne	Banner	Scotts Bluff
Canada Goose	x	x	x	x
Wood Duck	x			x
Gadwall	x	x	x	x
American Wigeon			x	x
Mallard	x	x	x	x
Blue-winged Teal	x	x	x	x
Cinnamon Teal			x	x
Northern Shoveler	x	x	x	x
Northern Pintail	x		x	x
Green-winged Teal	x	x	x	x
Canvasback	x			
Redhead	x	x	x	x
Lesser Scaup				x
Bufflehead	x			
Hooded Merganser	x			
Ruddy Duck	x	x		x
Ring-necked Pheasant	x	x	x	x
Sharp-tailed Grouse	x			
Wild Turkey			x	x
Pied-billed Grebe	x	x		
Eared Grebe	x	x		x
Western Grebe	x			x
Double-crested Cormorant	x			x
American White Pelican		x		x
Great Blue Heron	x	x	x	x

NOU Annual Meeting - Kimball				
	Kimball	Cheyenne	Banner	Scotts Bluff
Great Egret				x
Snowy Egret				x
Cattle Egret				x
White-faced Ibis	x	x	x	x
Turkey Vulture	x	x	x	x
Osprey				x
Bald Eagle				x
Northern Harrier	x	x	x	x
Cooper's Hawk	x			x
Swainson's Hawk	x	x	x	x
Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x
Ferruginous Hawk	x			
Golden Eagle		x	x	
Sora	x		x	x
American Coot	x	x	x	x
Killdeer	x	x	x	x
Mountain Plover	x			
American Avocet		x	x	x
Spotted Sandpiper	x		x	x
Greater Yellowlegs			x	
Lesser Yellowlegs		x		
Upland Sandpiper	x			
Wilson's Snipe				x
Wilson's Phalarope		x	x	x
Ring-billed Gull	x	x		x
California Gull				x
Black Tern				x
Common Tern	x			
Forster's Tern	x			x
Rock Pigeon	x	x	x	x
Eurasian Collared-Dove	x	x	x	x
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x
Barn Owl				x
Great Horned Owl	x		x	
Burrowing Owl	x			x
Short-eared Owl	x			
Common Nighthawk	x			
Chimney Swift	x	x	x	x
White-throated Swift				x
Belted Kingfisher	x			x
Red-headed Woodpecker	x	x	x	x
Downy Woodpecker	x	x		x
Northern Flicker	x	x	x	
American Kestrel	x	x	x	x

NOU Annual Meeting - Kimball				
	Kimball	Cheyenne	Banner	Scotts Bluff
Prairie Falcon	x			
Olive-sided Flycatcher	x			
Western Wood-Pewee	x	x		x
Willow Flycatcher	x			
Least Flycatcher	x	x		
Gray Flycatcher	x			
Dusky Flycatcher	x			
Say's Phoebe	x	x	x	x
Cassin's Kingbird	x	x	x	
Western Kingbird	x	x	x	x
Eastern Kingbird	x	x	x	x
Loggerhead Shrike	x	x	x	
Plumbeous Vireo	x			
Warbling Vireo	x			
Red-eyed Vireo	x			
Blue Jay	x	x	x	x
Black-billed Magpie				x
American Crow	x	x	x	x
Horned Lark	x	x	x	x
Tree Swallow	x		x	x
Violet-green Swallow			x	x
N. Rough-winged Swallow		x	x	x
Bank Swallow				x
Cliff Swallow	x	x	x	x
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x
Black-capped Chickadee	x			x
Red-breasted Nuthatch				x
Pygmy Nuthatch				x
Rock Wren	x	x	x	
House Wren	x	x	x	x
Marsh Wren				x
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	x	x	x	x
Eastern Bluebird	x		x	x
Mountain Bluebird	x		x	x
Gray-cheeked Thrush	x			
Swainson's Thrush	x	x		x
Wood Thrush	x			
American Robin	x	x	x	x
Gray Catbird	x			x
Northern Mockingbird	x			
Brown Thrasher	x	x	x	x
European Starling	x	x	x	x
Cedar Waxwing	x		x	x
Chestnut-collared Longspur	x			

NOU Annual Meeting - Kimball				
	Kimball	Cheyenne	Banner	Scotts Bluff
McCown's Longspur	x			
Orange-crowned Warbler	x			
MacGillivray's Warbler	x			
Common Yellowthroat	x	x	x	x
Northern Parula	x			
Yellow Warbler	x	x	x	x
Yellow-rumped Warbler	x			
Wilson's Warbler	x			x
Yellow-breasted Chat	x			x
Green-tailed Towhee				x
Spotted Towhee	x		x	x
Chipping Sparrow	x	x	x	x
Clay-colored Sparrow	x	x	x	x
Brewer's Sparrow	x		x	
Field Sparrow				x
Vesper Sparrow	x		x	x
Lark Sparrow	x	x	x	x
Lark Bunting	x	x	x	x
Grasshopper Sparrow	x	x	x	x
Song Sparrow	x			
Lincoln's Sparrow	x			
White-crowned Sparrow	x			x
Western Tanager	x	x		
Northern Cardinal	x			
Black-headed Grosbeak	x			
Blue Grosbeak	x		x	x
Lazuli Bunting	x		x	x
Bobolink		x		
Red-winged Blackbird	x	x	x	x
Western Meadowlark	x	x	x	x
Yellow-headed Blackbird	x	x	x	x
Brewer's Blackbird	x		x	x
Common Grackle	x	x	x	x
Great-tailed Grackle	x	x		x
Brown-headed Cowbird	x	x	x	x
Orchard Oriole	x	x	x	x
Bullock's Oriole	x	x	x	x
Baltimore Oriole		x		
House Finch	x	x		x
Pine Siskin	x			x
Lesser Goldfinch	x			
American Goldfinch	x	x	x	x
House Sparrow	x	x	x	x
Total Species: 156	125	74	78	110