Audubon | GREAT PLAINS



2026

FALL NEWSLETTER

Kentucky Warbler. Photo: Mark Gordon/Audubon Photography Awards



The Platte River at Rowe Sanctuary near Gibbon, Nebraska.
Photo: Sydney Walsh/Audubon.

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LETTER FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT







As we welcome fall across the Great Plains, I find myself reflecting on the many ways conservation takes shape. Some moments are big and worthy of celebration, while others may seem small at first glance but contribute to something greater.

This season, we have some significant accomplishments to celebrate. In North Dakota, the Conservation Forage Program recently surpassed an incredible milestone: more than 20,000 acres of working lands have been restored to native grasslands. We are also celebrating another successful season of summer camps, where young people had opportunities to explore, learn, and build a connection with the natural world through hands-on experiences fueled by mud, laughter, and curiosity.

And while we celebrate these big wins, I also want to take a moment to recognize the smaller moments that make a big impact.

At Brigham Sanctuary in North Dakota, a local student pursuing their Eagle Scout award took on a project to create, fundraise for, and install an information kiosk at the sanctuary.

At Rowe Sanctuary, a generous donation from Marvin and Marilyn Heckman, made it possible to construct a new equipment shed on the property. The shed provides a place to safely store our tractor and skid steer out of the elements, helping preserve the lifespan of these essential tools that are critical for our conservation work.

At Spring Creek Prairie, a team of three staff members and three volunteers conducted bird surveys across the tallgrass prairie in southeastern Nebraska to monitor declining Henslow's Sparrows. The data collected will help inform future habitat management and guide additional research to better understand and support this species.

These projects may not always make the biggest headlines, but they are important reminders that conservation happens in many ways. It happens through major investments and ambitious programs, but it also happens through a student giving their time, a donor making a generous gift, a volunteer showing up, or a community coming together to care for a special place.

As you explore this issue of our newsletter, I invite you to dive deeper into the many ways your support is making an impact across the Great Plains. Learn more about the economic impact of crane season and the many ways these remarkable birds and the Platte River contribute to Nebraska communities.

And as we look ahead, we are preparing for another legislative session across the Great Plains. We know that policy decisions can have a lasting impact on the lands, waters, and wildlife we all value. Our goal is to be a resource for you, sharing information, context, and opportunities to stay informed about the conservation issues that matter to our region.

Thank you for being part of this work. Together, these big wins and small moments are helping build a healthier future for birds, people, and the places we share.



Kristal Stoner
Vice President Audubon Great Plains

Photos from left: Lena Tebben, Eagle Scout prospect, standing with the new information kiosk at Brigham Sanctuary. Photo: Kelly Tebben/Audubon. The new equipment shed housing equipment at Rowe Sanctuary. Photo: Marcos Stoltzfus/Audubon. Henslow's Sparrow. Photo: Brady Karg/Audubon.

BIRD SCIENCE

KENTUCKY WARBLER MIGRATION FROM THE GREAT PLAINS TO THE TROPICS

Tracking birds and building connections.

By Stephen Brenner, Avian Biologist



Photo: Kentucky Warbler outfitted with a light-level geolocator. The capture, handling, and banding of all wild birds was done by trained professionals under appropriate federal and state authorizations. Photo: Stephen Brenner/Audubon.

While it has long been known that many songbirds complete vast migrations from the temperate zones to the tropics each year, surprisingly few species have been tracked along their entire journey across the hemisphere to specific nonbreeding areas. Given that events on the wintering grounds and along migration can have a large impact on birds that breed in North America, the need for understanding the full annual cycle of migratory species has never been greater.

Enter the Kentucky Warbler, a striking yellow and black ground-dwelling forest bird of southeastern North America. In Nebraska, this species reaches its northwestern range limit, breeding only in the largest tracts of oak-woodlands at the extreme southeast corner of the state. Little is known about this species at the edge of its range, and no individual of this species has ever been tracked along its migration or to its wintering grounds. Populations of Kentucky Warblers have been in relative decline since the end of last century, and it remains unclear if conditions during the breeding season or the nonbreeding season are challenging the recovery of this incredible warbler. Studying the migratory routes and non-breeding grounds of birds in our region not only establishes a connection between the Great Plains and tropical ecosystems, but this also helps identify potential conservation opportunities beyond our borders.

In 2025, biologists from Audubon Great Plains and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission initiated a project tracking Kentucky Warblers to discover their migration routes and establish where birds breeding at range periphery spend the nonbreeding season. Researchers deployed light-level geolocators to track these small birds over the course of a year. This technology has been used across many species of warblers since the mid-2010s, and was recently used to discover the unique migrations, wintering grounds and high survival of Ovenbirds breeding in the northwestern regions of Nebraska.

In 2026, two Kentucky Warblers tagged in the previous year were recaptured on their breeding grounds and data from one geolocator was recovered. Early analysis on this tag points to a South American wintering site, which would mean Kentucky Warblers in the Great Plains complete two 3,000+ mile journeys each year between breeding and wintering locations. Hopefully a few more geolocators can be recovered and additional data processing can reveal even more about these amazing birds as this project continues into 2027.

CLIMATE ACTION

FORECASTING WATER SUPPLIES FOR BIRDS AND COMMUNITIES

Collaborating to balance water needs of the Platte River during seasons of drought.

By Melissa Mosier, Program Manager, Platte River Initiative





Left: Sunset over Lake McConaughy in the summer of 2026, when near-historic low reservoir levels left a vast, sandy shoreline. Photo: Melissa Mosier/Audubon.

Right: Boat ramp at Lake McConaughy in the summer of 2026 that no longer reaches the water due to low reservoir levels. Photo: Brett Roberg/Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Sadly, the times when I'm most likely to get a peek at the Platte River are only when I'm crossing over it on I-80, driving to or from the many meetings where I sit in a room and talk to people about the Platte River. But on my way home from one of those meetings right after Labor Day, I saved time to spend the night on the shores of Lake McConaughy. It may seem strange to count this giant reservoir as part of the Platte River, but it is truly integral to this river system and everything that it supports downstream. And right now, Nebraska's largest reservoir is currently sitting only a quarter of the way full, near the record-low levels measured in 2004. Certainly there was an abundance of sandy beach available to pitch a tent - but also an eeriness when imagining the immense volume of water that previously held that space.

Lake McConaughy was built in the 1940s to store water when North Platte River flows were running high in the spring and to make that water available later in the year, when summertime supplies were lower than what farmers needed for irrigation. Today, water stored in the reservoir serves many purposes, including irrigation, power production, community water supplies, recreation, and environmental needs. And the amount of water available in the reservoir is closely tied to what happens much farther upstream. Snowpack that accumulates in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and Wyoming over the winter is one of our best indicators of how much water will flow into Lake McConaughy and eventually downstream along the Platte.

Deciding when and how much water to release from Lake McConaughy is therefore a big job—and one that involves many partners. Historic agreements provide guidelines for how the reservoir is to be operated, but balancing water needs during prolonged drought requires broad collaboration.

A small but vital portion of the water stored in Lake McConaughy is dedicated to an Environmental Account, which is used to support threatened and endangered species and their habitat on the Central Platte. Those releases help sustain the Platte River ecosystem throughout the year, not just during spring crane migration. Apart from Environmental Account and irrigation operations, streamflow released from Lake McConaughy in the winter and early spring helps maintain the river and its food web, supporting the aquatic life, insects, and plants that cranes depend on. When more than a million Sandhill Cranes arrive in spring, healthy river flows also provide open channels where cranes can safely roost at night, giving them an early-warning system for predators and helping them conserve precious energy for migration. The benefits don't stop with cranes as a recent economic analysis shows that the spring Sandhill Crane migration supports a $28M ecotourism industry along the Central Platte (See page 9 for details).

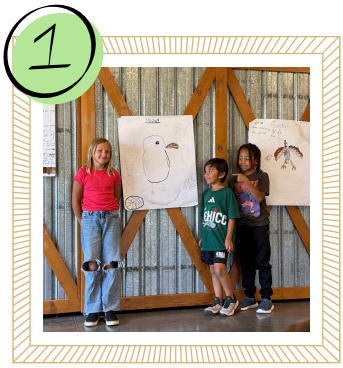
But climate change is adding another layer of complexity. Longer and more severe droughts are expected to become more frequent, particularly in the western Platte River Basin. Because water shortages affect both people and ecosystems, we need to think ahead about how to avoid crossing over critical ecological and socioeconomic thresholds from which recovery becomes increasingly difficult.

That's why Audubon and our VESPR partners (Vision for an Ecologically Sound Platte River) are planning a climate-focused scenario planning process beginning in late 2026 and continuing into spring 2027. By bringing together people who understand the needs of agriculture, power production, communities, wildlife, and the river itself, we can explore a range of possible futures and identify actions that help build resilience. Tools like scenario planning – that unveil some clarity in the clouds of uncertainty that we and our partners make decisions under – are our best means of forecasting how to balance future water needs for birds and people.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

SUMMER CAMP HIGHLIGHTS!

A summer full of sunshine, adventure, discovery, and a little bit of dirt under the fingernails! Check out what our campers explored this summer at Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Iain Nicolson Rowe Sanctuary and at Edward Brigham Sanctuary!



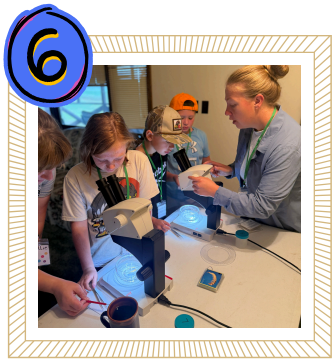








WOW









1. SCP: At the end of the week, campers create their own birds with unique adaptations!
2. Rowe: Art & Nature Week had the campers carving sculptures out of foam. These two campers decided to capture tractors disking the sandbars in the Platte River for conservation!
3. Dakotas: Our campers enjoyed making and eating camp-themed snacks!
4. SCP: Campers get an up-close look at insects and arachnids, like this harvestman, while discovering the important roles these creatures play in a healthy ecosystem.
5. Rowe: Our campers explored the wetlands and learned about what lives in the water!
6. Dakotas: We took a closer look at nature through microscopes!
7. SCP: Campers learned how to use binoculars and tested their abilities!
8. Rowe: Campers pose with the mural they painted during Bird Week of Prairie Safari camp!
9. Dakotas: We had fun dip-netting to explore wetland ecology.

Photos 1,4,7: Brady Karg/Audubon. Photos 2,5,8: Amanda Hefner/Audubon. Photo 3: Kelly Tebben/Audubon. Photos 6, 9: Amanda Booher/Audubon.

HABITAT CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY BUILDING

A MILESTONE MADE TOGETHER: CELEBRATING 20,000 ACRES OF CONSERVATION

Defending conservation and advancing commonsense policy.

By Amanda Booher, Communications Manager

Recently, our team celebrated an incredible milestone: over 20,000 acres enrolled in the Conservation Forage Program (CFP)! This achievement was made possible by landowners, partners, and organizations who believe in a healthier future for our grasslands and wildlife across North Dakota. The Conservation Forage Program aims to put grasslands back on the landscape for birds and livestock producers through a unique land-restoration model in the Dakotas.

To celebrate this achievement, landowners, conservation partners, and agency leaders gathered in September in Bismarck to recognize the program's impact and the partnerships that make it all happen.

Beginning with a field tour of the Welch's family farm south of Bismarck, attendees saw firsthand the land restored through the Conservation Forage Program and learned how conservation practices can benefit working lands and wildlife. Mike Welch and his brother Jon raise cattle on the same land their family has used for agriculture since 1876, when their great-grandfather Oliver settled near Menoken. The Welches run a combination of pasture and grain ground, guided by the belief that diversification is key to keeping the operation on the path for another 150 years. "Some years the grain pays the bills, and some years cows pay the bills," Mike Welch said.

At September's celebration event, the field tour offered an opportunity to connect with partner organizations, learn directly from landowners benefiting from the program, and build relationships with like-minded conservation professionals.

Following the tour, we convened at the North Dakota Heritage Center, where speakers shared their perspectives on the importance of CFP.

The event featured remarks from:

- Kristal Stoner, Vice President, Audubon Great Plains
- Christa Kiedrowski, Regional Director for Senator John Hoeven
- John Devney, Chief Policy Officer, Delta Waterfowl
- Dave Dewald, Board Chair, Outdoor Heritage Fund
- Scott McLeod, State Coordinator, North Dakota Partners for Fish and Wildlife
- Erin Gaugler, Conservation Forage Program landowner
- Dr. Susan Felege, Professor of Biology – Wildlife Ecology and Management, University of North Dakota







Photos, top, bottom left: Attendees touring a CFP site at the Welch Family Farm. Photos: Amanda Booher/Audubon. Luncheon celebration at the ND Heritage Center. Photo: Amanda Booher/Audubon.

Speakers reflected on the Conservation Forage Program's history, the benefits it has brought to landowners and bird populations, and their hopes for its future, including the potential to see the program replicated across the country. The room was filled with a sense of gratitude and pride for what has been accomplished, and for the years of work it took to build support and reach this important milestone.

From concept to implementation, the Conservation Forage Program wouldn't be possible without partnership. It's clear that when conservation meets collaboration, big things happen!

Audubon Great Plains is grateful to every landowner, partner organization, supporter, and funding partners including Corteva and the Outdoor Heritage Fund, who have helped make the Conservation Forage Program a success. Together, we're restoring grasslands, supporting working lands, and creating a stronger future for people, wildlife, and the Great Plains.

POLICY LEADERSHIP

RESTORING GRASSLANDS, STRENGTHENING RANCHING: WHY THE RANCH ACT MATTERS FOR THE GREAT PLAINS

Utilizing partnerships for conservation action.

By Traci Bruckner, Senior Policy Manager



Across the Great Plains, grasslands are the foundation of thriving ranching operations, healthy wildlife populations, and resilient rural communities. Yet these critical landscapes continue to face mounting pressures. As native prairie has been converted to cropland over recent decades, coupled with an invasion of eastern red cedar choking out grasslands, grassland birds have experienced some of the steepest population declines of any bird group, with populations falling by 43 percent over the past 50 years. At the same time, many producers are farming increasingly marginal acres that are often less productive and more vulnerable to erosion, drought, and nutrient loss.

The bipartisan RANCH Act (S.5277) offers a promising solution. Introduced by Senators Mike Rounds (R-SD) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), the legislation would provide voluntary financial and technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers convert marginal cropland into long-term native grasses and forbs. The bill is designed to restore native grasslands, expand grazing opportunities, improve soil and water resources, and create habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife.

For Audubon Great Plains, this legislation builds on a model we know works. The RANCH Act draws directly from Audubon's successful Conservation Forage Program in North Dakota and our partnership with Ducks Unlimited and the Working Grasslands Partnership in South Dakota, both of which have helped producers return marginal cropland to productive native grasslands that support both livestock production and wildlife habitat.

By establishing diverse native grasslands, producers gain valuable forage resources while reducing risks associated with farming less productive acres. Birds, pollinators, and other wildlife benefit from the restored habitat, creating conservation gains alongside economic returns.

The need for this approach is particularly urgent in the Great Plains, where ranching and healthy grasslands are deeply interconnected. Grasslands provide the foundation for productive grazing systems, helping producers build resilience while maintaining working lands for future generations. These same landscapes support bird species that depend on large expanses of grassland habitat, making ranchers important partners in grassland conservation. The RANCH Act recognizes that conservation and agricultural success go hand in hand. By investing in voluntary, incentive-based solutions, Congress can help keep working lands working while supporting the communities, wildlife, and industries that depend on them.

By helping producers establish long-term native cover, the RANCH Act would strengthen ranching operations, improve soil and water quality, and restore habitat for declining grassland birds. Building on the proven success of the Conservation Forage Program, this legislation offers a pathway to healthier grasslands, stronger ranching economies, and more resilient Great Plains landscapes for generations to come.

Photo: A Western Meadowlark at the Leigh-Fairhead Ranch, an Audubon Certified Bird-Friendly ranch in the Nebraska Sandhills. Photo by Shea Evans.

POLICY LEADERSHIP

PREPARING FOR THE 2027 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS IN THE GREAT PLAINS

Early preparation keeps you informed and ready to engage on issues that need your support.

By Traci Bruckner, Senior Policy Manager

As state legislatures begin preparing for their 2027 sessions, now is the time to start planning for the policy discussions and legislative activity that will shape the year ahead. Early preparation can help you stay informed, anticipate emerging issues, and engage effectively throughout the session. In the coming months, we'll share webinars, updates on legislation we're tracking, and other resources to help you stay ahead of and engage on key developments. To help you get started, here are five key steps you can take now to prepare for 2027.



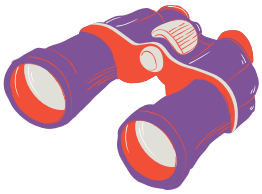
1. Develop your conservation story
Prepare a short personal message about why birds and the Great Plains matter to you and why state policy decisions are important.



2. Build relationships before the session starts
Reach out to your state lawmaker(s) now and introduce yourself as a constituent who cares about birds, habitat, and healthy communities.



3. Attend local legislative events
Participate in town halls, coffees, and listening sessions to learn lawmakers' priorities and share conservation perspectives.



4. Invite lawmakers into the field
Offer opportunities for legislators to visit local birding areas, wetlands, grasslands, farms, or community projects to see conservation in action.

5. Prepare to take action quickly
Sign up for Audubon legislative webinars, updates, and action alerts so you're ready to contact lawmakers when important bills are introduced and critical debates are happening.

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT:
https://act.audubon.org/a/subscribe-audubon-great-plains-news

THE 2026 ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY OF THE SPRING WILDLIFE MIGRATION ON CENTRAL NEBRASKA

We're making the case that protecting the Platte River and the Sandhill Crane migration is an investment in both nature and Nebraska's economy.

By Marcos Stoltzfus, Rowe Sanctuary Center Director

WHEN THE SANDHILL CRANES LAND, SO DO THOUSANDS OF TOURISTS.



The Sandhill Crane migration during late winter and early spring, in central Nebraska is internationally recognized as one of the world's great wildlife migrations. Each year, more than a million cranes stop along the Platte River on their journey north.

This annual gathering attracts visitors from around the world, inspiring awe through both the sheer scale of the migration and the majesty of these charismatic birds.

Located in the heart of the migration corridor, Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary protects critical stopover habitat for cranes and other wildlife.

Each year, Rowe Sanctuary welcomes visitors from across the country and around the globe, regularly hosting guests from all 50 states and more than 20 countries.

THE CRANE MIGRATION HELPS THE LOCAL ECONOMY SOAR.



*Including property taxes Rowe pays annually.

At Audubon, we say "what's good for birds is good for people," and the Sandhill Crane migration is a great example. As tourists flock to Nebraska to see cranes, they spend money at local businesses, boosting the economy and supporting jobs. A 2025 study measured the annual economic impact of migration across 14 Nebraska counties, including both economic activity and jobs supported by conservation efforts and visitor spending.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

$28 Million: The estimated total economic impact roughly doubled from $14M when the study was last conducted in 2017.

49 jobs in conservation organizations and 171 jobs in the community were supported through visitor spending.

This conservation-powered economic force doesn't stop at one purchase; it ripples through the local economy, benefiting suppliers, service providers, businesses, and municipal governments.



THE PLATTE RIVER SUSTAINS WILDLIFE, STRENGTHENS LOCAL ECONOMIES, AND ENSURES FUTURE GENERATIONS CAN EXPERIENCE THE AWE OF CRANE MIGRATION FOR YEARS TO COME.

PROTECTING THE PLATTE IS PROTECTING THE ECONOMY.

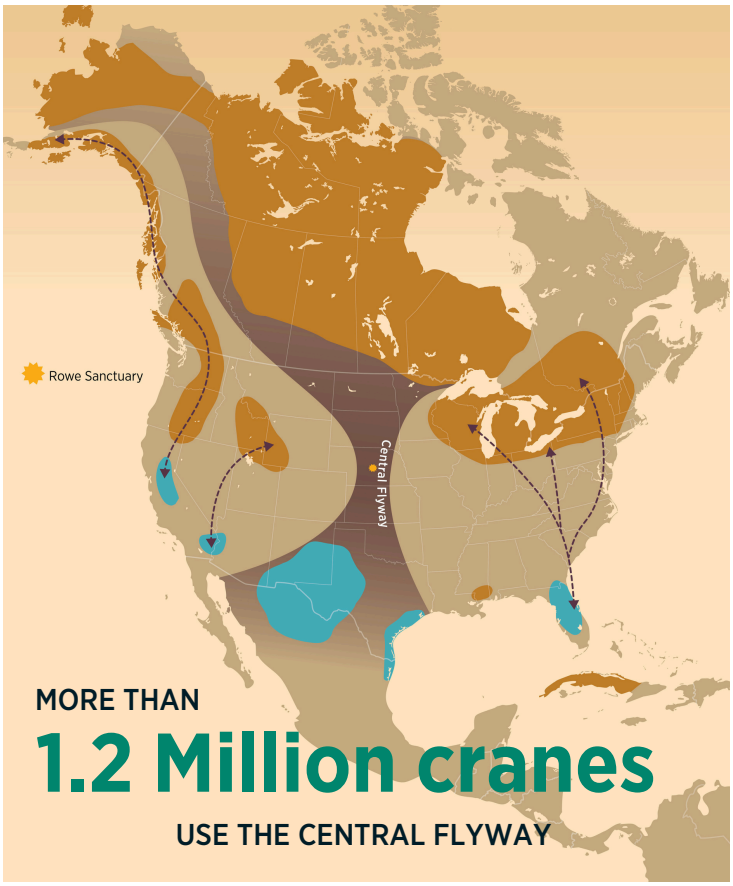
The Platte River is essential to the Sandhill Crane migration, providing the habitat cranes need to rest and refuel on their journey north.

For more than 50 years, Audubon has worked to protect and restore crane habitat along the Platte River through conservation, stewardship, and community partnerships. Protecting the Platte River helps sustain the habitat cranes depend on and the economic benefits the migration brings to local communities.

Unfortunately, 70% of the water in the Platte is diverted before it reaches Rowe Sanctuary, endangering the habitat and exacerbating land management challenges.

Through the Platte River Initiative, Audubon is a conservation leader across the watershed, advocating for water and habitats and bringing conservation partners together in unified efforts. We engage policymakers and stakeholders to communicate conservation needs and demonstrate the larger impact of our work.

SANDHILL CRANE MIGRATION TAKES A HEMISPHERE. SO DOES PROTECTING IT.



Nebraska is important for Sandhill Cranes, but their journey doesn't stop there. Audubon takes a hemispheric approach to bird conservation and directs work to the places where birds need it the most.

It recognizes that the majority of bird species in the Americas migrate annually between Canada, the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Audubon's conservation approach is like the birds—unencumbered by political boundaries and seamlessly integrated across the Western Hemisphere.

In overwintering grounds along the Texas Gulf Coast, Audubon recently released a tool that models environmental and social factors to predict which parcels of land are the highest priorities to conserve for endangered Whooping Cranes.

In the Great Plains, in addition to Rowe Sanctuary, we've provided leadership in securing protection for thousands of acres of crane habitat in the Prairie Pothole Region.

Audubon is an active partner in protecting the Seal River Watershed in the Boreal Forests of Canada, where many cranes nest and raise their young every year.

Scan the QR code to view the full report and study methodology.

The message is simple: If we want this extraordinary migration to continue, we must protect the habitats that make it possible.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

SOUTH DAKOTA'S PRAIRIE FEST 2026

Audubon Great Plains staff provides bird-focused education, activities, and outdoor excitement for Prairie Fest attendees.

By Jason "the Birdnerd" St. Sauver, Senior Manager of Education; and Kelly Tebben, Senior Coordinator of Outreach

If you spend a day on the South Dakota prairie with its rustling grasses, bright blooms, open skies, and rich wildlife, then it's easy to understand why so many people are passionate about conserving it. Grasslands are vibrant natural landscapes with great ecological, cultural, and economic importance. South Dakota was once almost entirely covered by grasslands and native prairie. Today, less than half of this original ecosystem remains.

At Good Earth State Park southeast of Sioux Falls, the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition hosted a free, all-ages event to celebrate grasslands last August. The public was invited to explore, learn, and celebrate together with many conservation partners as we acknowledged that this rich native landscape provides benefits that touch the lives of every South Dakotan.



Attendees exploring Good Earth during the morning activities.
Photo: Jason "the Birdnerd" St. Sauver/Audubon.

Prairie Fest started with "early bird" activities including a bird walk, bird banding demonstration, and prairie tour. Audubon Great Plains' own Jason "the Birdnerd" St. Sauver helped lead the birding walk while sharing about the importance of grasslands. The group found the on-site feeders busy with Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and American Goldfinches before walking the prairie trails to find several migrating warbler species, Baltimore Orioles, and even a female Northern Cardinal being removed from a mist net and then banded.

Later, the Birdnerd presented on the concerning decline of grassland birds and how everyone can help by encouraging the use of native plants, supporting groups like Audubon and the SD Grasslands Coalition, and also by being aware of local, state, and federal programs supporting healthy grasslands across the Great Plains.



Learning about conservation and birds at our booth.
Photo: Kelly Tebben/Audubon.

Audubon Great Plains' Director of Conservation, Joshua Lefers, and Coordinator of Outreach, Kelly Tebben, were at the event to engage attendees in conversations about grassland birds with a variety of topics: habitat, diet, migration, rangeland programs, and more. Participants were also able to interact with the world of birds at the Audubon Great Plains booth by competing in the Bird Olympics (How many times can you flap your arms in 10 seconds?) or trying to "fill the bill" with a Bird Beak Adaptations activity (How do birds crack open seeds or get worms out of the dirt with just their beaks?).

Why did attendees specifically come to the event? Perhaps to explore the beautiful prairie? Participate in fun hands-on activities? Learn amazing facts about birds? Toe-tap to live music while eating tasty local foods? Win cool prizes? We can't be sure! However, one thing we are confident about is that Prairie Fest was a huge success in bringing together the community and engaging all attendees in promoting a passion for grasslands across the Great Plains.



Cattle grazing at Two-Rivers Ranch in Nebraska. Photo: Shea Evans.

AUDUBON RECEIVES NFWF GRASSLAND RESILIENCE AND CONSERVATION INITIATIVE AWARD

Expanding wildlife-friendly grazing systems across the landscape.

By Joshua Lefers, Director of Conservation

The National Audubon Society has been awarded nearly $4 million dollars from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grassland Resilience and Conservation Initiative (GRACI) grant, an investment that will significantly expand our ability to protect and restore North America's most imperiled ecosystem, the grasslands. This award recognizes both the urgency of grassland loss across the region and the effectiveness of conservation strategies that Audubon and our partners have been advancing for years.

The award covers 13 states across the central grasslands, from North Dakota to Texas, Iowa to Arizona. Throughout this landscape, intact prairies and the diversity they contain continue to be lost to conversion, encroachment of woody species, and incompatible land uses. With this GRACI support, Audubon will expand wildlife-friendly grazing systems and provide financial and technical resources to producers, who are essential to long-term stewardship. The award will also help us expand science-driven monitoring through an innovative partnership with Cultivo, ensuring that projects deliver measurable benefits for grassland birds, soil health, water quality, and climate resilience.

A major focus of the grant is expanding Audubon Conservation Ranching support across the region, both for current and prospective enrolled ranchers. Audubon will work directly with ranchers to implement regenerative grazing practices and restore grasslands to improve grassland health and habitat on hundreds of thousands of acres while supporting the livelihoods of producers who care deeply about the land. The partnership with Cultivo will provide direct per-acre payments to producers for implementing conservation plans and practices, providing foundational financial support for stewardship activities.

This award allows Audubon Great Plains to expand and support Audubon Conservation Ranching in the region and deliver conservation not just for today, but for future generations of people and birds who will depend on these ecosystems as much as we do.

GRAZED ON AUDUBON CERTIFIED BIRD FRIENDLY LAND

Scan to learn more about Audubon Conservation Ranching



the canopy

Canopy members champion Audubon's bird-inspired, people-powered conservation.

The Canopy is a community of conservation leaders, advocates, and generous donors united by their love of birds. With annual gifts starting at $10,000, Canopy members play a critical role in advancing Audubon's work and inspiring others to take action.

Exclusive Member Benefits

Through exclusive communications and events, The Canopy offers a space for conservation-minded leaders to connect with one another and the birds that spur us into action.

Become a Canopy member today to join our exclusive trips with itineraries built for birders. Trips often involve travel to Audubon conservation action centers across the country.

Please contact alyssa.mirto@audubon.org for more program information.

Violet-crowned Hummingbird. Photo: James Lusk.

Who We Are

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Stephen Brenner, Avian Biologist
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Sam Kiley, Leadership Giving Director
Charli Kohler, Range Ecologist
Mikayla Kolbeck, Habitat Technician
Josh Lefers, Conservation Director
Sydney Lynch, Habitat Technician
Melissa Mosier, Program Manager, Platte River Initiative
Laura Rubeck, RCPP Specialist
Kelly Tebben, Senior Outreach Coordinator
North Platte Range Ecologist, Nebraska | Vacant

Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary

Marcos Stoltzfus, Center Director
Kass Goentzel, Facilities Assistant
Amanda Hefner, Education and Outreach Manager
Amanda Hegg, Senior Conservation Associate
Ashley Jarmin, Operations Manager
Katie Moore, Volunteer Coordinator
Bryce Sutton, Conservation Program Technician
Anne Troyer, Senior Outreach Coordinator
Cody Wagner, Conservation Program Manager

Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center

Meghan Sittler, Director
Matt Harvey, Project Assistant
Ed Hubbs, Habitat and Private Lands Manager
Brady Karg, Senior Education Coordinator
Wyatt Koehler, Senior Habitat Coordinator
Kevin Poague, Operations Manager
Amy Plettner, Caretaker
Jason “The Birdnerd” St. Sauver, Senior Education Manager

Donate

Help protect birds and the places they need.

Scan the code to donate.

Where We Are

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Campers at Spring Creek Prairie enjoy a wagon ride through the prairie to learn more about the history, visit the cows we use for grazing, and look for more elusive grassland specialists like the Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Regal Fritillary butterfly. Photo: Brady Karg/Audubon.