



The Burrowing Owl

November
2020

A Publication of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union

Dedicated to the study, appreciation, and protection of birds

2021 membership renewals coming up fast

The time to renew your NOU membership is coming up fast. This is a reminder that you can now renew online at www.NOUbirds.org. Many members are already well versed in using the system. If not, simply go to the site, click "About" on the top menu bar, and then select "Join/renew membership." On some devices, you may need to tap on the three white lines on the upper left hand side of the screen. From there, either log in to your current account or create a new account if you do not have one. Once this is completed, you will be set. Furthermore, you will be able to register for future meetings on the NOU website. If you have problems or need assistance, please send me an email at nebraska.ornithologists.union@gmail.com. We

continue to strongly encourage individuals to do their renewals or join the NOU online through the NOU website.

NOU's Next Scheduled Meetings

Spring Meeting: Gering, 21-23 May 2021

Fall Meeting: Schramm Park State Recreation Area, fall 2021

New Members

Kimberly Hill Grundman, Firth
Welcome!

Moving?

If you are changing addresses, please update it by logging into the NOU website or by sending a note to Jan Johnson at janbirder@gmail.com. Copies of the *Nebraska Bird Review* sent to defunct addresses are costing the NOU unnecessary postage. Being proactive will help us save dollars.

Christmas Bird Counts - up in the air

Christmas Birds Counts (CBCs) would usually take place in the coming weeks, but like so many aspects of our lives, COVID-19 has disrupted some plans. Normally, a list of CBC dates and contacts would be included in this edition of the newsletter, but not this year. The Audubon Society has provided guidance to CBC compilers on how to make decisions about their CBCs. Choices on whether or how to hold a CBC are largely up to individual compilers. Furthermore, some compilers may choose to limit participants and plans could change with circumstances. Therefore, if you are wondering whether you should be making plans to participate in a CBC this year, you should contact individual compilers if they have not been in touch already. Additional information may be posted on NEbirds. The Omaha CBC has already been cancelled this year and others may follow suit, but some (e.g., Lake McConaughy, Lincoln) are planning to forge ahead.



NOU Big Weekend comes up big

In lieu of a fall meeting, which was cancelled because of COVID-19, the NOU once again held a “Big Weekend” on 24-25 October. A strong weather system brought a nice push of waterbirds over that weekend. Although that same system brought snow to western parts of the state, conditions were favorable for birding in the east. T.J. Walker once again compiled the Big Weekend results. A total of 164 species were tallied, with at least one report from 35 of the 93 counties. Highlights include 27 species of waterfowl, including Long-tailed Duck and all three scoter species, Pacific Loon, Whooping



Pacific Loon at Pawnee Lake, Lancaster County. The bird was discovered on 24 October by Michael Willison, who captured this photo on 25 October.

Crane and American Woodcocks that showed up in a few lucky people’s backyard. Even though the Big Weekend was productive and fun, it should also be noted that the fall meeting, if it had taken place, would have been nicely timed and probably would have been very productive for birds. Hopefully, this is the last Big Weekend the NOU has for a while because it would be nice to have an old fashioned meeting in spring 2021. Thanks again to all who participated and to T.J. Walker for his compilation of the observations.

Proposed change to the Bylaws

The NOU Board of Directors is proposing to amend the bylaws. Specifically, the proposed change would alter the composition of the Nominating Committee. The proposed change is planned to come up for a vote of the membership at the Business Meeting during the 2021 spring meeting in Gering, Nebraska. This change was originally planned to come up for a vote at the 2020 Business Meeting, but those plans were derailed by the 2020 meeting cancellations. The Bylaws also requires that the membership be made aware of the proposed change more than thirty days in advance of the Business Meeting. The proposed change is from page 4 of the Bylaws, which are available on the NOU website at <https://noubirds.org/Documents/Bylaws.pdf>. The proposed changes to the Nominating Committee section are shown below. Changes are highlighted in yellow, with the language shown with the strikethrough as words proposed to be deleted. Language proposed to be added in shown in red.

Nominating Committee – It shall consist of three members ~~who are not members of the Board of Directors, and~~ who have been **members** ~~active participants~~ in the organization for at least five years. **No more than one committee member shall also be a member of the Board of Directors.** Only one member may have served on the previous year’s committee, but may not serve more than two consecutive terms. Its purpose is to assure that at least one candidate for each office will be available at the annual meeting. Each nominee for each office must indicate a willingness to accept office if elected. The committee shall present nominee names at the annual business meeting of the Corporation.



Fulvous Whistling-Duck harvested, frigatebird carcass discovered in western Nebraska

There have been a couple of notable bird records in the state over the past few weeks that have occurred under the radar. First, a Fulvous Whistling-Duck was harvested by a hunter at Clear Creek Wildlife Management Area, Keith County, on 28 October. Photographs of the bird were acquired and confirm the bird's identity. The bird showed no signs (e.g., absent [removed] hallux) of being an escaped captive. Although it may seem like an odd time of year for this southern species to make its way up to our latitude, there is a pattern of northerly vagrancy in fall. If accepted by the NOU Records Committee, this will be just a second state record. Photo of the Fulvous Whistling-Duck by Matt Wieseler.



Just as noteworthy, a dead frigatebird was discovered north of Gothenburg, Dawson Co, on 11 November. The specimen was recovered by Mark Peyton and it will eventually find its way to the state museum. The bird is apparently a Magnificent Frigatebird, but further inspection will confirm its identity. Nebraska claims one other record of Magnificent Frigatebird and three other records of frigatebird species. This will be, by far, the best-documented occurrence of a frigatebird in the state. Watch for future seasonal field reports and Records Committee's report in the *Nebraska Bird Review* for more details about these two notable records.

Johnsgard donates books to the NOU Library

NOU member and Nebraska icon Dr. Paul Johnsgard recently made a generous donation of a number of rare books to the NOU library. This include volumes not previously in the collection.

Thank You!



Photo quiz (answer at the bottom of the page)



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Photo quiz answer: First, this is a gull in flight over water. Although the photo is mediocre at best, the extensive brown in the wings indicate it is an immature and, in fact, it appears to be a first-cycle bird. The spread wing is relatively uniform in color and the bill appears all black. The white tail with a limited black band toward the distal end should catch our attention. All of these field marks help us identify this bird as a first-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull

