



Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership

Conservation. Sensible Solutions.

A Newsletter by and for our Volunteers and Partners

Changing of the Seasons—Fall is Here!

Greetings! Signs of Fall are everywhere—from the colorful and falling leaves to the crisp blue skies and the skeins of snow geese flying south as fast as their wings can carry them.

Partnership staff had a busy summer! Some of our outreach activities included: Sensory Safari at the Lincoln Children's Zoo (for the visually impaired), World's Largest Outdoor Classroom at the State Fair, and a booth

at the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance Water Quality open golf tournament.

The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership celebrates the ending of the field season and beginning of Fall with their Annual Appreciation Picnic and Awards. *See pages one and two for details.*

Fall is also a time for cleaning, and as you'll see on *page 3*, the UNL Wildlife Club helped with the dusty

task of cleaning and organizing our warehouse.

On *page 2* is an introduction to our newest member, Mary Bomberger Brown, and get reacquainted with a past technician, Kari Andresen, on *page 3*.

Watch for our new and improved web page—it's coming soon! Same address, new look. <http://ternandplover.unl.edu> See you in the Spring! *Chris Thody—Editor*

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As the Plover Terns

Picnic on the Prairie

Saturday, September 22nd was the date of our eighth annual Appreciation Picnic. The picnic is the culmination of our field season, and it's our way of giving back just a little for all the hard work and effort our volunteers and partners have contributed.



Audubon Nebraska's beautiful Spring Creek Prairie was the setting for the picnic. The weather was superb, the food was plentiful, and the accommodations were first-rate.

Chris Thody

This year the annual gathering gave us an excuse to show off our new logo, designed by Sarah Rehme. And this logo was edible! Thanks, Sarah, for the delicious design.



Our picnic is also a time to honor those people who have gone above and beyond what has been asked of them. We have a fantastic group of individuals that give their time and expertise to our program. See the Annual Awards article on *page 2*.

A special thank you goes out to George Rezac for being our official photographer for this event.

Special points of interest:

- Annual Awards Announced.
- New Program Coordinator Mary Bomberger Brown leaps into position.
- See what former Technician Kari Andresen has been doing.
- UNL Wildlife Club helps clean up a very messy warehouse.
- Consider a donation to the Tern and Plover Conservation Excellence Fund. Details included inside.

Annual Awards

Chris Thody



Diane Pratt

All who participate in the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership are winners. Each individual has a unique contribution to make. We appreciate every single minute each volunteer is able to afford to help us reach our goal—increasing the number of least terns and piping plovers, and someday to see them off the endangered species list.

There are a few individuals we would like to give special thanks to. These individuals have gone above and beyond what has been asked of them, and our Partnership is extremely grateful for their extra effort.

Diane Pratt, a 6-year volunteer, logged 37.75 hours and received the “Golden Binocular Award” for the most hours volunteered this year.

Additionally, Diane put in another 121.5 hours as a volunteer technician, a new position created this year.

Elliott Bedows, a 2-year volunteer, logged 27.5 hours and received the “Silver Binocular Award” for the second most hours volunteered this year.

Congratulations, Diane and Elliott!

Coordinator’s Corner Mary Bomberger Brown



Mary with volunteer Ruth Egisti at the Appreciation Picnic.

First, let me introduce myself. My name is Mary Bomberger Brown and I am the new Program Coordinator. I joined the Partnership this summer, on July 9.

I am a native Nebraskan, growing up and going to school in Lincoln, including the University of Nebraska. Life has taken me to university positions in New Jersey, Connecticut and most recently, Oklahoma. Despite living all across the country, I’ve maintained a close connection to the state, so Nebraska really is my home. Every summer since 1982, I was part of a large research project studying Cliff Swallows, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*, in western Nebraska. We were based at the University of Nebraska’s Cedar Point Biological Station (CPBS) near Ogallala. Biology summer courses are taught at CPBS, so if you are interested in learning biology the “right way”, meaning out of doors, keep CPBS in mind (cpbs2@unl.edu).

My attentions were focused on Cliff Swallows during those years, but I spent a lot of time simply watching terns and plovers live their lives. Over those 25 years, we learned a lot about Cliff Swallows and the natural history of Nebraska. Without doubt, the two most important things we learned are what a remarkable place Nebraska is and what remarkable people live here. We are fortunate to live in this part of the world. After the summer was over and I was back in the city, sitting at my desk, I’d often think of the wide expanse of clear, blue sky during the day and the bright, crisp stars at night. Truly, ‘there is no place like Nebraska’. Those memories and a desire to help conserve and maintain a Nebraska for everyone are what brought me to the Partnership.

Thanks to Renae Held, our former Program Coordinator, for all she did for the Partnership. She left us with

a healthy, vibrant program and Nebraska with a lot more terns and plovers. We all wish Renae good luck in her new position with the New Mexico Game and Parks Department’s Threatened and Endangered Species program.

By working together, as Partners, we can accomplish great things. Join us by contributing your time, energy and enthusiasm to the Partnership. We could not do what we do without our volunteers. Thank you for your tireless work and commitment!

Please consider a financial contribution to our efforts with a donation to the Tern and Plover Conservation Excellence Fund (#10234), through the University of Nebraska Foundation (www.nufoundation.org). The terns and plovers will be very grateful for your help.

More later, Mary



Removing old mylar from fiberglass poles during shop cleaning.

Keeping in Touch

Kari Andresen

I have to admit I was a bit unsure of what was in store for me when I was offered a position as a Conservation Technician for the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership. This was my first “wildlife job” as a fresh graduate of the University of Nebraska with a BS in Natural Resources and one of only a handful of women who had majored in Fisheries and Wildlife. I would be conducting intensive field work, studying these “little shore-birds” (terns and plovers) I had only read about. By the end of the summer, I was definitely sun burned from long days on the sand pits, but I *felt* like an expert, I knew the calls of each bird, how to spot a camouflaged nest in the sand through a spotting scope, how to age an

egg and a chick, and even how to drive an airboat (even if it was only for a few minutes)! My passion for ALL bird species was ignited and I wanted to learn everything I could and I was lucky enough to have had the best teachers: Renae Held, former TPCP Coordinator and John Dinan, former Non-game Bird Program Manager at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Both were positive, challenging educators that taught me what I would like to emulate as a supervisor. I was also fortunate to have a fantastic co-worker, Sam*, who was just as eager to learn as me and taught me a lot as well. My position as a Conservation Technician encouraged values and skills that I use everyday throughout my career as a Bird Biologist and more recently as an Envi-

ronmental Scientist. A position with the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership as a Conservation Technician turned out to be one of my most rewarding work and personal experiences and opened a door to a successful career in the natural sciences.

I continue my career working as an Environmental Scientist for a consulting and engineering firm in Kansas City, MO. My position lets me be on the front lines of environmental protection, as I aid in providing environmentally conscious solutions for engineering projects of all sizes. I will also begin a Master program in Ecology at the University of Kansas in January.

*Sam (Wilson) is currently the Non-game Mammal and Furbearer Program Manager at Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.



Kari Andresen, Conservation Technician, 2003

UNL Wildlife Club Helps with Cleanup

It’s amazing what the promise of homemade cookies can do. Six sturdy UNL Wildlife Club students donned their gloves and pitched in to help clean up years of accumulated equipment and stuff in our warehouse.

The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership was able to make a small donation to the Wildlife Club general fund in thanks for their efforts.

As you can see from the pictures on the right, this was no small task. The before picture was actually shown to the Club during one of their meetings and they still offered to help!

Thanks to the acrobatics and strong muscles of these willing students, we got a jump start on next season and know what we have and what

we may need to acquire in the coming months.

Thanks to all the students that helped, and a special thanks to Jason and Lars, who showed up both evenings and did an excellent job of organizing and inventorying.



Left to right: Angie, Jason, Lars, Ted, Colleen, Aaron



before



after

About the Partnership

Mission Statement

The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership (Partnership) studies and protects endangered Least Terns, threatened Piping Plovers and other birds within the Platte River system, Nebraska, in a manner that minimizes conflicts with private industry, and educates and involves local communities in this effort.

History: The Partnership was founded in 1999 to prevent and resolve conflicts between nesting birds and sand and gravel mining industry operations. Jeanine Lackey and Ron Johnson from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, and John Dinan of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission initiated the program. The approach of the Partnership is to work with all interested parties to find sensible, proactive solutions to protecting terns, plovers, and other components of the Platte River ecosystem, while ensuring that business, industry, and private interests are free to continue to operate with minimal interference.

Partnership Activities

- Protect colonies from predation and human disturbance using electric fences, enclosure cages, and signage.
- Create strong working relationships between sand and gravel mining companies, homeowner's associations, local governments, conservation organizations, and the public.
- Prevent and mitigate conflicts between nesting birds and business' interests.
- Increase awareness and appreciation of conservation issues by participating in events that educate the public, business, and government.
- Involve students through our "Job Shadowing" program.
- Monitor tern and plover colonies through our community based "Adopt-a-Colony" volunteer program.
- Produce publications such as the poster "A Tale of Two Birds" and companion educator's packet/CD, as well as research publications, our biannual newsletter, brochures, fact sheets, and web page.

Partnership Impacts by the Numbers

43—Number of conflicts resolved since 1999.

60—Number of Volunteers per year.



130—The minimum number of additional piping plovers estimated to have been produced because of Partnership management techniques.

430—The minimum number of additional least terns estimated to have been produced because of Partnership management techniques.



ZERO—The number of prosecutions and fines participating industry partners received since 1999.

Partners



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Partners: Arps Gravel and Concrete, Girl Scouts-Great Plains Council, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, Lyman-Richey Corporation, Mallard Sand and Gravel Company, Harwest Corporation, The Nebraska Environmental Trust, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nongame Conservation Fund, Overland Sand and Gravel Company, Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Western Sand and Gravel.

Please consider a donation to the Tern and Plover Conservation Excellence Fund. Contact Ann Bruntz at 402-458-1176 for abruntz AT nufoundation.org for more information.