



TERN AND PLOVER CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

AS THE PLOVER TERNS

Thanks, Volunteers!

Volume 6, Issue 1

Spring 2006



A Newsletter for and by Volunteers

“Birds signal the spring to light up our lives.” - *Raul Jidy*

Spring is officially here! Least terns and piping plovers are making their way northward, and that means it’s Adopt-a-Colony time.

Volunteers will be receiving a training schedule postcard in the next couple of weeks. Please note that this year there will be both “new volunteer” and “returning volunteer” training. We will continue monitoring of great blue heron colonies and a few bald eagle nests, along with the terns and plovers.

In June, Partnership staff will be participating in the International Piping Plover Census that will take place throughout USA and Canada during the early part of June. See the article below for more details.

On Page 2, I’ll introduce you to Joel Jorgensen, the non-game bird program manager at Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. He will help guide us in our efforts to conserve and protect least terns and piping plovers.

Also on Page 2, read about how one of our past technicians has been honored to participate in The Wildlife Soci-

ety’s Leadership Institute.

Although the April 17th deadline for taxes has passed—don’t forget to make a donation to the “Checkoff for Wildlife”. This fund has helped support the Partnership. See Page 3 for more information about making a donation.

Finally, on Page 4, read about how Rowe Sanctuary near Gibbon, NE, has added a large parcel of land, named the John Dinan Tract that will benefit migrating Sandhill cranes and other birds.

- *Chris Thody, Editor*

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International Piping Plover Census 2006

In 2006, we will be participating in the International Piping Plover Census. The International Piping Plover Census is a complete census of Piping Plovers in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, St. Pierre and Miquelon (France). This will be the fourth complete census of Piping Plovers in the past 15 years. Birds will be surveyed all across their winter and breeding grounds.

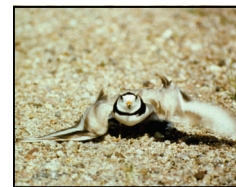
The first census was conducted in 1991, and then every five years after. The census will take place the first two

weeks in June, and all sites known to be occupied or have habitat will be surveyed. The census will help researchers gain better information in several areas including (but not limited to):

- determining trends of distribution and abundance;
- assessing the progress of recovery efforts; and
- showing areas of special concern.

The Census is coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey. It will be con-

ducted by over 1,000 biologists from federal, state, local and non-governmental agencies, in addition to local birders.



Piping plover “feigning” a broken wing.

See <http://fresc.usgs.gov/products/ppl/> for additional information.

Introducing Joel Jorgensen

by Chris Thody

I would like to introduce the new Nongame Bird Program Manager at Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC). His name is Joel Jorgensen, and he is a native of Blair, Nebraska. He started with NGPC at the end of January.



He has been interested in birds for the better part of his life. He has birded a good part of the U.S., but has spent most of his time in Nebraska. While he is interested in the avifauna throughout the state, he has been particularly interested in the Rainwater Basin in south-central Nebraska.

This region is both one of the most ecologically important and most-altered ecoregions in Nebraska. Migratory shorebird use in the region has been a special focus of his efforts.

His research indicates that the Rainwater Basin is a major, and perhaps

primary, stopover site in North America for one shorebird, the Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

Joel is also interested in the prairie ecosystem and prairie restoration. He is currently restoring 5 acres adjacent to a small parcel of virgin, albeit degraded, prairie in the Rainwater Basin that he and his dad own. He says restoration has been a challenging endeavor, but putting the time in collecting and sowing seeds, then observing the evolution from weed patch to a different kind of weed patch to a weed patch with some desirable prairie plant has been interesting and rewarding. In 2005, the restoration tract was beginning to resemble a nifty and diverse prairie.

He has served on the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee 1997-present (from 1999-2001 he was chairman) and is co-author of *The Birds of Nebraska: Their Distribution and Temporal Occurrence*.

Joel is a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and is

currently writing the final draft of his thesis. He works under the direction of John P. McCarty and L. LaReesa Wolfenbarger.

Please help us to welcome Joel. His contact information is:

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Check out his website at:
www.jorgensencontracting.com

*Editor's note: **Kari Andresen**, a former technician for the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership, is a Biologist II at NGPC, assisting Joel in the Nongame Bird Program.*

The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership would also like to welcome two new seasonal technicians. **Robin Smith and Jeremy Poell**. Robin began working April 3, and Jeremy will begin April 18. Welcome Robin and Jeremy!

Technician Update - Silka (Finkbeiner) Kempema



Silka (Finkbeiner) Kempema, a former seasonal technician for the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership (2000), has been selected as one of 10 participants in the nation to participate in The Wildlife Society's Leadership Institute.

The Wildlife Society is the professional organization for wildlife biologists/ecologists. The goal of the Leadership Institute is to facilitate the development of new leaders within The Wildlife Society and the wildlife profession as a whole. This is the first year for

this award program.

Selected participants will read and review a series of documents during late spring and summer 2006, and participate in conference calls and other interactions with the Institute's mentoring committee. Institute members will attend the 2006 TWS Annual Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, in September and participate in various activities, including several mentoring and leadership workshop sessions. Certificates of participation will be presented at the successful culmination of the program following the 2006 conference.

Silka is an MS student of Dr. Larkin Powell at the University of Nebraska (and has almost completed her thesis). Silka's research involved grassland birds on grazed systems on private ranches in the Nebraska Sandhills. She is currently employed by USFWS in SD.

From Dr. Powell: "This is a great opportunity for Silka and I believe it certainly is further evidence that our graduate program in wildlife/fisheries ecology is attracting top students (as well as adding to their expertise!)."

Congratulations, Silka!

Don't Forget Wildlife at Tax Time!

by Rick Schneider

You can help conserve wildlife in Nebraska by donating to the Non-game Species Conservation Fund. Just look for the “check for wildlife” symbol on your state income tax return (or alert your tax preparer) and designate all or a portion of your refund to the fund. If you’re not getting a refund this year you can still help, donations can also be made online at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission’s website www.outdoornebraska.org/wildlife. All donations are tax deductible and go directly to benefiting wildlife.



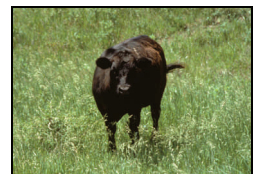
Over 2000 species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and plants and tens of thousands of insect species are considered nongame species in Nebraska - species that are not hunted, trapped or fished. These constitute 99% of all species in the state. By law, revenue from hunting and fishing licenses cannot be spent directly on nongame species. This makes the Nongame Species Conservation Fund the state’s primary source of state funding for monitoring, researching, managing and conserving the vast majority of our wildlife. Federal grants available for nongame wildlife have increased over the past 4 years but our ability to take advantage of these new grants depends on our being able to provide matching state funds. This is why the Nongame Species Conservation Fund is so vital to our state’s wildlife; typically every state dollar is matched with 3 to 9 dollars from federal grants or partner contributions. Some of the projects made possible by these funds include:

► For over a decade, the Nongame Fund has helped support the reintroduction of peregrine falcons to Omaha and Lincoln. This past year a pair nesting on the state capitol made history by fledging the first known chick in Lincoln’s history. The Fund helped pay for a web camera to bring this historic occasion to the Internet, and more than 170,000 visits were recorded on the falcon-cam page during the nesting season.



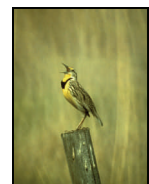
► Prairie restoration in central and eastern Nebraska has been aided by the purchase of equipment to conduct prescribed burns, which is made available to landowners at a minimal cost. This past year, Fund money was provided to the Prairie Plains Resource Institute to facilitate restoration on the Griffith Prairie north of Aurora, through cedar removal and prescribed fire.

► Research and inventory efforts such as the Sandhills Grassland Birds and Grazing Project. This specific project will provide ranchers and land managers with information on how different grazing practices affect vegetation and breeding bird use of grasslands. Other projects, such as yearly river otter and swift fox surveys, provide valuable information for wildlife managers in their efforts to recover these species to a level that will allow for their removal from threatened or endangered status.



► Educational and outreach efforts such as the Bats of Nebraska Teachers Workshop provided free to educators, and the Central Nebraska Wildlife Viewing Guide provided free to the thousands of waterfowl and crane watchers that visit Nebraska each year bringing with them important economic benefits to our state.

► The creation and maintenance of important partnerships such as the **Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership** that brings private industry together with wildlife managers and educators to address the challenges of endangered species management. The Nebraska Prairie Partners Project is a cooperative effort aimed at conserving native grassland birds and their habitats through research, education and outreach that encourages private landowner involvement in habitat stewardship and conservation.



The Nongame Species Conservation Fund allows everyone to be a part of conserving our state’s wildlife and wild places for the future. Any donation amount is helpful and every dollar goes directly to conserving Nebraska’s nongame wildlife and wild places. **We can all make a difference for our future.**

200 acres near Rowe Sanctuary named after biologist John Dinan

By the Lincoln Journal Star
 Tuesday, Mar 28, 2006 - 06:06:46 pm CST

Two hundred acres of riverfront along the Platte River near Rowe Sanctuary will be named after John Dinan, a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission biologist who died last year.

National Audubon Society's Rowe Sanctuary announced the purchase Monday. The mile of riverfront in Buffalo County will be managed for wildlife habitat, particularly for the use of migrating sandhill cranes in the spring.

Dinan worked extensively with endangered species in the state. He died last fall from leukemia at the age of 51. A dedication ceremony will be planned for late spring.



"John Dinan was a good friend of the sanctuary. He did a lot of important work for endangered species on the Platte River," said sanctuary assistant manager Bill Taddicken.

Total cost of the project was \$800,000, he said.

The purchase was made possible by a \$375,000 grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund. The Nebraska Game and Parks also gave \$365,000, (from two critical habitat and wildlife federal grants it administers). The Pine Tree Conservation Society and several private donors also contributed money.



Please consider making a donation to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society via the "Team in Training" program. Joeth Zucco, a friend of our volunteer Kathryn Wells, is trying to raise \$4,500 for the LLS by participating in an Olympic-distance triathlon on June 25, 2006, in Philadelphia. Go to <http://www.active.com/donate/tntne/tntneJZucco> for more information.

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Partners: Nongame Conservation Fund, Overland Sand and Gravel Company, Western Sand and Gravel Company, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Girl Scouts-Great Plains Council, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska Environmental Trust, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, Arps Gravel and Concrete, Lyman-Richey Corporation, Mallard Sand and Gravel, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

<http://ternandplover.unl.edu>