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In Memoriam [June 2014]

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In Memorium

In 2013 the Nebraska Ornithologists’ Union lost three loyal members: Alice Rushton, Gertrude Wood and Mitzi Fox.

Alice Smith Rushton died in Longmont, Colorado, on Nov. 9, 2013, at age 88. She is survived by three daughters, a son and numerous grandchildren. She was born in Colorado but spent most of her adult life in the Omaha area, employed by the Bennington school system as a teacher and counselor. After retiring from teaching, she and her husband Bud traveled, and after he died, she became the church secretary at First United Methodist Church in Omaha. She was active there with visitation programs and cancer support groups. Obviously Alice was a birder, too, and that is how we came to know her. She continued to enjoy travel, making birding trips to Canada and to New Zealand. She was a longtime NOU member and served as Secretary in 1990. She is remembered as a gentle lady who met life’s problems with a positive attitude.

Gertrude True Wood, formerly of Elmwood, died in York on June 11, 2013, at age 83. She is survived by two daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was the widow of Don Wood, with whom she shared a great interest in the history of Cass
County. Gertrude wrote and published *Lewis and Clark in Cass County* in 1996 after she and her husband spent years researching the Expedition's passage up the Missouri River and their camps in Cass County. She worked as a commercial artist and freelance writer. Gertrude also worked for a taxidermy company in the Omaha area, where her job was to make glass eyes used in the taxidermy mounts. She would go to the Henry Doorly Zoo and study the particular animal she was working on so she would get the eyes exactly right. This attention to detail carried over into her birding. She was regarded as a serious and active birder and was known for her keen eyesight and identification skills. According to the NOU website, her life list for the state is 347 species, and there are 26 counties for which her species list totals 125 or more. Most impressive, though, is her Cass County list: 294 species, a record which is likely to stand for years to come. The next best Cass County total is 211.

Mitzi Madsen Fox passed away at age 79 on July 28, 2013, in Albion, where she had lived since 1960 with her husband Jim. She and Jim raised five children in Albion, and Mitzi was active in church groups and served on the boards of the Albion Schools and the First National Bank. She helped raise money for a new swimming pool in Albion and was instrumental in the protection of the Olsen Nature Preserve north of Albion. She was on the board of the Prairie Plains Resource Institute in Aurora. She participated in the Beaver Valley Christmas Bird Count and served as NOU Secretary from 2000 to 2004. She was known as a person who unselfishly gave her time, talent and resources to the community of Albion, never expecting any recognition for what she did. Her knowledge and interests were widely varied, and she could talk about prairie vegetation, good books to read, or New York theater as easily as she could talk about birds in her backyard.