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Halsey Fall Field Days

by Alice Kenitz
(reprinted from the October 2003 NOU Newsletter)

Forty-one NOU members and friends gathered at the 4-H Camp at Halsey in the Nebraska National Forest on September 26-28, 2003, for the annual Fall Field Days. Fall colors were beautiful and the weather was generally good except for a brisk wind on Friday and Saturday. The ongoing drought was evident in the low level of lakes and ponds, with some of the smaller bodies of water being completely dry.

On Friday evening, Bub Blake wowed us once again with his bird photography, showing slides he has taken in Nebraska and Kansas recently. On Saturday evening, Kevin Poague of Audubon Nebraska talked to us about the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program.

Field trips were held all day Saturday and on Sunday morning. On Saturday, Dave Heidt led a trip north to Ainsworth and vicinity. Clem Klaphake led a trip to the Valentine NWR. Others were on their own to bird in the Forest or nearby areas. Sunday morning most of us enjoyed birding around the Forest. The tree dump is always a popular place for finding birds. Towhees - both Eastern and Spotted - seemed very numerous this year. Ruth Green had her banding stations set up behind the Lodge, so we could all get a good look at birds-in-the-hand. We enjoyed close-up looks at Eastern and Spotted Towhees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, White-throated Sparrows, the gray-headed race of the Dark-eyed Junco, and other species. There were 119 species identified in Thomas, Hooker, Cherry, Brown and Blaine Counties as well as the Forest. Interestingly, this is the same number of species we had last year.

It is always exciting to see Trumpeter Swans, and we weren't disappointed. Several of the guys found a Burrowing Owl on the road on Friday evening. There was a Magnolia Warbler seen at Valentine NWR - a species we don't see very often at the Fall Field Days.

For some unknown reason, the gate to the fire tower was unlocked and several birders were able to go to the top. I remember doing that about 20 years ago - what a view!

Thanks to Bub Blake for donating a beautiful framed photo of a Wood Duck. It was raffled and \$69.05 was added to our treasury. There were donations of many lovely door prizes.

It was a great weekend of birding and fellowship!! Those of us who lingered as long as possible on Sunday afternoon were privileged to see and hear a flock of Sandhill Cranes flying over the Lodge. Great end to a great weekend.

NOU Fall Field Days - September 2003 - Halsey

	Halsey NF	Thomas	Hooker	Cherry	Brown	Blaine
Canada Goose				x	x	x
Trumpeter Swan				x		
Wood Duck	x	x		x	x	x
Gadwall				x	x	x
American Wigeon				x	x	
Mallard				x	x	x
Blue-winged Teal				x	x	x
Northern Shoveler				x	x	
Northern Pintail				x	x	
Green-winged Teal				x	x	x
Redhead				x		
Ring-necked Duck				x		
Lesser Scaup				x	x	
Ruddy Duck				x	x	
Ring-necked Pheasant				x	x	x
Sharp-tailed Grouse	x				x	
Greater Prairie-Chicken	x	x		x	x	x
Wild Turkey	x	x		x		x
Northern Bobwhite	x					
Pied-billed Grebe	x			x	x	
Western Grebe				x		
American White Pelican				x		
Double-crested Cormorant				x	x	
American Bittern					x	
Great Blue Heron				x	x	x
Turkey Vulture	x	x		x	x	x
Osprey	x	x				
Northern Harrier	x			x	x	x
Sharp-shinned Hawk	x			x		x
Cooper's Hawk		x				
Swainson's Hawk	x	x		x	x	x
Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ferruginous Hawk						x
Rough-legged Hawk		x				
American Kestrel	x	x		x	x	x
Merlin	x					
Prairie Falcon	x			x	x	x
American Coot				x	x	
Sandhill Crane	x					x
Killdeer		x		x	x	x
American Avocet				x	x	

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	Halsey NF	Thomas	Hooker	Cherry	Brown	Blaine
Greater Yellowlegs				x	x	x
Lesser Yellowlegs				x	x	x
Willet					x	
Least Sandpiper					x	
Baird's Sandpiper				x		
Pectoral Sandpiper					x	
Stilt Sandpiper					x	x
Long-billed Dowitcher					x	
Dowitcher sp.						x
Wilson's Snipe	x			x		x
Wilson's Phalarope					x	
Franklin's Gull				x		
Ring-billed Gull				x	x	
Forster's Tern				x	x	
Rock Pigeon		x	x		x	x
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x	x	x
Great Horned Owl	x					x
Burrowing Owl	x					
Short-eared Owl				x		
Belted Kingfisher		x		x		x
Red-headed Woodpecker						x
Downy Woodpecker	x			x	x	x
Hairy Woodpecker	x					
Northern Flicker	x	x		x	x	x
Eastern Wood-Pewee					x	
Eastern Phoebe				x		
Shrike sp.						x
Blue Jay	x			x	x	x
American Crow	x	x		x	x	x
Horned Lark	x	x		x	x	x
Northern Rough-winged Swallow					x	
Barn Swallow		x		x	x	x
Black-capped Chickadee	x	x				x
Red-breasted Nuthatch	x	x				
White-breasted Nuthatch	x					
House Wren						x
Marsh Wren						x
Eastern Bluebird	x					x
Townsend's Solitaire	x			x		
Swainson's Thrush	x					
American Robin	x	x		x		x

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	Halsey NF	Thomas	Hooker	Cherry	Brown	Blaine
Gray Catbird		x				
Brown Thrasher	x			x	x	x
European Starling				x	x	x
American Pipit				x		
Cedar Waxwing	x	x			x	x
Orange-crowned Warbler	x	x		x		x
Magnolia Warbler				x		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	x	x		x		x
Common Yellowthroat	x			x		x
Wilson's Warbler	x					
Spotted Towhee	x			x		x
Eastern Towhee	x					
American Tree Sparrow		x		x		x
Chipping Sparrow	x	x		x		x
Clay-colored Sparrow	x	x		x		x
Field Sparrow	x	x		x	x	
Vesper Sparrow	x	x		x	x	x
Lark Sparrow		x			x	x
Lark Bunting	x			x		
Savannah Sparrow				x	x	x
Fox Sparrow				x		
Song Sparrow				x		
Lincoln's Sparrow	x	x		x		x
White-throated Sparrow	x	x		x		x
Harris's Sparrow				x		x
White-crowned Sparrow	x	x		x	x	x
Dark-eyed Junco	x			x		x
Northern Cardinal	x					
Red-winged Blackbird		x		x	x	x
Western Meadowlark	x	x	x	x	x	x
Yellow-headed Blackbird					x	x
Brewer's Blackbird				x		x
Common Grackle	x	x			x	x
Brown-headed Cowbird				x	x	x
House Finch	x				x	x
Red Crossbill	x	x				
American Goldfinch	x	x		x	x	x
House Sparrow						x
	56	39	4	78	62	69
Total Species: 119						