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Fall Field Days at Ashland

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Fall Field Days at Ashland

The Fall Field Days were held southeast of Ashland at the Carol Joy Holling Conference Center September 26-28. Field trips to Platte River and Schramm State Parks, Louisville and Memphis SRAs, Jack Sinn WMA, Fontenelle Forest, and Spring Creek Prairie were led by Kevin Poague, Clem Klaphake, Larry Einemann, Rick Schmid, and Don and Janis Paseka.

Hawk migration was in full swing, and we observed 10 species, including a number of Broad-wings and Swainson's. An American Golden-Plover was a standout among the dozen shorebird species, and 10 warbler species were found, including Black-throated Green and Canada. Total species count was 126.

Our speaker on Friday night was NOU member Dr. Daniel Leger, Professor of Psychology at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. His presentation was entitled, 'How Many Bird Species are there and How Do We Know?' His answer was that there are around 10,000 species right now, that number is increasing, and we probably will never know how many species there are. He spoke about "cryptic" species, ones that were there all along but were never noticed because we lacked crucial behavioral, vocal or genetic data. Dr. Leger's work has included uncovering some cryptic species and will eventually result in the Bright-rumped Attila and the Ochre-bellied Flycatcher each being split into multiple species.

On Saturday night, Dr. Robert Gibson, Professor of Biology at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, spoke about avian lek behavior. Several hundred species of birds exhibit lek behavior, in which clustered males engage in sometimes spectacular courtship behavior while the females are allowed a relatively unhindered choice of a mate. Dr. Gibson's studies have shown that females favor males in groups and prefer certain lek hotspots that are close to nesting sites. Only a few of the males actually mate, but the others may have more chance of mating if they display at a known lek site. Another advantage is that an individual bird stands a greater chance of survival during a predator attack in a group than it does if it is alone.

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	Cass	Lancaster	Sarpy	Saunders
Cackling Goose			x	
Canada Goose	x	x	x	x
Wood Duck		x	x	x
Mallard	x	x	x	x
Blue-winged Teal	x	x	x	x
Northern Shoveler		x		
Ring-necked Pheasant			x	x
Wild Turkey	x		x	
Pied-billed Grebe	x	x	x	x
American White Pelican	x		x	
Double-crested Cormorant	x	x	x	x
Great Blue Heron	x	x	x	x
Great Egret				x
Green Heron		x		x
<i>Plegadis sp.</i>		x		x
Turkey Vulture	x	x	x	x
Osprey	x	x	x	x
Bald Eagle	x		x	
Northern Harrier	x	x	x	x
Sharp-shinned Hawk		x	x	x
Cooper's Hawk	x	x	x	
Broad-winged Hawk	x		x	
Swainson's Hawk	x			
Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x
American Kestrel	x	x	x	x
Black Rail * (see note below)		x		
Sora	x	x		x
American Coot	x	x	x	x
American Golden Plover				x
Killdeer	x	x	x	x
Greater Yellowlegs				x
Lesser Yellowlegs				x
Spotted Sandpiper			x	x
Semipalmated Sandpiper				x
Least Sandpiper		x		x
Baird's Sandpiper				x
Pectoral Sandpiper		x		x
Stilt Sandpiper		x		

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	Cass	Lancaster	Sarpy	Saunders
Long-billed Dowitcher			x	
Wilson's Snipe		x		x
Franklin's Gull	x	x	x	x
Ring-billed Gull	x	x	x	
Forster's Tern	x			
Rock Pigeon	x		x	x
Eurasian Collared-Dove			x	x
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x
Yellow-billed Cuckoo			x	
Common Nighthawk	x			x
Chimney Swift	x		x	x
Ruby-throated Hummingbird		x		
Belted Kingfisher	x	x	x	x
Red-headed Woodpecker	x	x	x	x
Red-bellied Woodpecker	x	x	x	x
Downy Woodpecker	x	x	x	
Hairy Woodpecker	x	x	x	
Northern Flicker	x	x	x	x
Eastern Wood-Pewee	x		x	
Eastern Phoebe	x	x	x	x
Eastern Kingbird			x	
Loggerhead Shrike				x
Blue-headed Vireo			x	x
Warbling Vireo				x
Philadelphia Vireo			x	
Blue Jay	x	x	x	x
American Crow	x	x	x	
Horned Lark			x	x
Tree Swallow		x	x	x
N. Rough-winged Swallow			x	
Bank Swallow				x
Cliff Swallow				x
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x
Black-capped Chickadee	x		x	
Tufted Titmouse	x		x	
White-breasted Nuthatch	x	x	x	x
Carolina Wren	x		x	
House Wren	x	x	x	x

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	Cass	Lancaster	Sarpy	Saunders
Sedge Wren			x	x
Marsh Wren		x	x	x
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		x	x	x
Eastern Bluebird	x	x	x	x
American Robin	x	x	x	x
Gray Catbird	x	x	x	x
Brown Thrasher		x	x	x
European Starling	x	x	x	x
American Pipit		x		
Cedar Waxwing	x	x	x	
Orange-crowned Warbler		x	x	x
Nashville Warbler	x	x	x	x
Northern Parula			x	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	x		x	x
Black-throated Green Warbler			x	
American Redstart			x	
Northern Waterthrush				x
Common Yellowthroat		x	x	x
Wilson's Warbler		x	x	
Canada Warbler			x	
Scarlet Tanager			x	
Spotted Towhee			x	
Eastern Towhee		x	x	
Chipping Sparrow	x		x	x
Clay-colored Sparrow			x	
Field Sparrow		x	x	
Vesper Sparrow		x		x
Lark Sparrow		x	x	x
Savannah Sparrow		x		x
Grasshopper Sparrow		x		
Le Conte's Sparrow		x		x
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow		x		x
Song Sparrow		x	x	x
Lincoln's Sparrow		x	x	x
Swamp Sparrow		x	x	
White-throated Sparrow			x	
Harris' Sparrow				x
White-crowned Sparrow				x

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	Cass	Lancaster	Sarpy	Saunders
Northern Cardinal	x	x	x	x
Indigo Bunting	x		x	x
Dickcissel		x	x	
Red-winged Blackbird		x	x	x
Eastern Meadowlark			x	x
Western Meadowlark		x	x	x
Common Grackle	x	x	x	x
Great-tailed Grackle			x	x
Brown-headed Cowbird		x	x	x
Baltimore Oriole	x			
House Finch	x	x	x	
American Goldfinch	x	x	x	x
House Sparrow	x	x	x	x
Total species: 127	58	75	94	84
* Subject to NOURC acceptance.				