Northeast District Meeting 5/17/2023 Fort Atkinson SHP

The meeting started with District Birding Day. Areas birded included the Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge and Fort Atkinson State Historical Park, as well as a few roads between these locations. A total of 96 species was tallied for the day. Some of the highlights included a Piping Plover, several Ruddy Turnstones, a Philadelphia Vireo, a Wood Thrush, a Northern Mockingbird, and a Cape May Warbler.

President Russ Hamer called the meeting to order.

Roll Call/Introductions:

Russ Hamer, Oak Valley WMA Kelbi Abke, Washington/Burt counties

Kyler Prochaska, Platte/Colfax counties Nick Fix, Dixon/Dakota/Thurston counties

Cory Krause, Cuming/Wayne/Stanton counties Matt Costello, Dodge/Colfax counties

Dale Davis, Bassett/Norfolk – NE district Lt. Mitch Johnson, Knox/Antelope counties

Tyler Wulf, Regional Park Superintendent Jonathan Andreasen, Madison/Pierce/Stanton

counties

John Bauer, Holt/Boyd counties

Tyler Adelman, Rock/Brown/Keya Paha

counties

Mark McDonald, Dodge County/Fremont Lakes

Jason Thiele, Norfolk

Harlee Phillips, Pheasants Forever, Stanton

Josh Kounovsky, Grove Lake WMA

Layne Bullock, Grove Lake WMA

Scott Oligmueller, Ponca SP

Hudson Schweers, Danish Alps SRA

Brian?, Ponca SP

Brady Peterson, Ponca SP

Jeff Jones, Knox/Cedar counties

John Denton, Ponca SP

Bill Booth, Fremont Lakes SRA

Hanna Barnes, Ponca SP

Rachel Russell, Ponca SP

Lynn Mellick, Ponca SP

Kate Birch, Ponca SP

Brenda Howell, Ponca SP

Nate Remter, Niobrara SP

Toni Hart, Niobrara SP

Tim Collins, George Syas WMA

Dan Vanderveen, Willow Creek SRA

Traci Wright, Lewis & Clark SRA

Leslie Donner, Lewis & Clark SRA

Jeff Borchers, George Syas WMA

Jordan Swenson, Summit Lake SRA

Jonathan Volker, Lewis & Clark SRA

Jim Swenson, Deputy Director

Jason Grof, Fort Atkinson SHP

Mike Westover, Fort Atkinson SHP

Shawna Richter-Ryerson, Communications,

Lincoln

Jane Gustafson, Communications, Lincoln

Fort Atkinson SHP Welcome/Update – Jason Grof

- The location was scouted by Lewis and Clark in 1804 who thought it would be a good location for a military post
- In the 1820s, Fort Atkinson was the base for approximately one-third of the US Army
- Buildings are reconstructed from original foundations
- The visitors center has been undergoing renovations for the past two years, and they are planning for grand reopening event on June 3-4

Administration Update - Jim Swenson, Deputy Director

- Let's have a record turnout for next year's district birding day.
- Know the landscapes that you work in and experience/enjoy them. Always remember that people are jealous of the jobs that we have.
- The legislature has been a major priority for Tim and Jim this year, with a lot of time spent with the Natural Resources Committee and the Appropriations Committee
 - A deficit request was made for authority to move money in Park Cash ("savings account") to the "checking account" to pay for wage increases for seasonal Parks employees; after a long process, this was eventually approved
 - Portions of the capital budget request and most of the operations budget were approved by the legislature but still need to be approved by the governor; capital maintenance fund for Parks was hit especially hard
 - O There was an attempt to sweep several million dollars of Park Cash to other accounts
 - New commissioners have not been confirmed and will probably not be confirmed during the current legislative session; governor will likely directly appoint two commissioners after the session is over [post-meeting update: Dan Hughes was confirmed as the District 5 commissioner on May 30]
 - o 11 senators were hosted at Fort Robinson SP to learn more about what the NGPC does
 - The proposal for NGPC to pay for wildlife depredation will probably be back at next year's legislative session
- Will interview for new department administrator for the Fish and Wildlife Education Division soon
- The Engineering Division is being restructured. Tiffani Gerber is currently the Assistant Division Administrator. The division lead position will be advertised soon. The Operations team has also been rolled into this division.
- STAR WARS update
 - o The Lewis & Clark marina project is proceeding ahead of schedule
 - A study is underway to determine the best location for a new marina at Lake McConaughy
 - The Niobrara State Park improvements are still under discussion. The original plans for the lodge may need to be scaled back. Access to the Missouri River is a big focus right now.
- The NGPC and partners were recently awarded a \$4 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's America the Beautiful Challenge for grassland, wetland, and stream conservation.

Communications Update – Shawna Richter-Ryerson and Jane Gustafson

- Photographers/videographer available to document projects and "tell stories" about the things we are doing
- E-mail NGPC.news@nebraska.gov to share stories or messages that you want to reach the public
- NGPC does some paid media for marketing/advertising but has many channels for outreach
- In the past, a lot of effort was spent to promote hunting opportunities to nonresidents. More recently, a heavier focus is being made on marketing to residents, particularly on fishing and parks. "Beneath Nebraska Skies" is the current campaign. Videos can be seen on the NGPC YouTube channel.
- The new NGPC website launched recently.

Law Enforcement Update – Dale Davis

- The officers have been undergoing a lot of training recently.
- The Northeast district is fully staffed with the recent hiring of four new officers.
- The Lake Mac plan appears to be working as Northeast officers have not been called there to assist and have been able to "stay home."

Parks Update – Tyler Wulf

- Welcome new employees Brenda and Kate to Ponca SP and Toni to Niobrara SP
- Hudson Schweers is the seasonal superintendent at Danish Alps SRA
- Fremont Lakes SRA nearing completion on an asphalt project. A new concessionaire will take over later this summer. New boating regulations are in effect to improve safety.
- Ponca SP is beginning its second season with Tentrr. The Mother's Day buffet was a success.
- Fort Atkinson is preparing for the reopening with events June 2-4.
- Summit Lake will have a grand opening for the new playground on June 10. Trail rides will be held on the new horse trail that was completed last year.
- The 9th Niobrara State Park Outdoor Educational Rendezvous was a big success with about 850 students attending. Thanks to all who helped with the many activities.
- \$2.5 million are available for river access near Niobrara. Community members want a boat ramp by town, but this may not be the best location. The current hope is to upgrade three or four access points to allow access as river conditions change with flow levels, sedimentation, etc. A contractor will do a feasibility study.
- A request for proposals will go out soon for a new 40-person lodge with event center at Niobrara SP. Surveys for a suitable location are under way.
- Lewis & Clark SRA will host a dueling pianos event on June 3; about 350-400 people are expected to attend. There is a new concessionaire (coffee shop trailer) that will be opening at the Weigand marina. The design of the new marina is about 60% completed. The goal is to be finished with the design phase and ready for bid around Labor Day. There will be about 425 boat slips and 100 jet ski slips. Construction will hopefully be completed by the end of 2025.

Missouri River Outdoor Expo Update – Scott Oligmueller

- Schedule for third weekend in September
- A new event will be log rolling attempt to log roll from South Dakota to Nebraska

- The Gould Brothers shooting demonstration will be replaced by a shooting competition by high school trap shooting teams
- A flying/aviation club from Wayne will also be present this year

Wildlife Update, Russ Hamer

- Thanks to all who have helped with crow counts for the UNL pheasant study and all who will help with bobwhite whistle counts this summer
- Goose banding will happen around the third week of June. Contact Lucas or Russ if interested in helping
- Russ is a licensed drone operator now. The drone has thermal imaging capabilities. They are looking for ways to utilize this technology.
- The Management Section did a nighttime prescribed burn at Wilkinson WMA to avoid the high winds and low relative humidity typical of daytime burns in the spring. It went very well.

Norfolk Office Update, via Melody Nuesch

- Denise Trine resigned from the Office Technician position; interviews will be held soon
- [update since meeting: Jasmine Villa accepted the position and will begin work on June 5]

The next meeting will likely be in early September in the Norfolk area. Stay tuned for details. There may also be a "road kill BBQ" year-end gathering in December. Russ has promised to bring smoked pigeon.

After lunch, contractors demonstrated a drone that can do herbicide application and some large mulching equipment.

Minutes submitted by Jason Thiele

| Cl. AVIDO | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Class - AVES | Northern Pintail | Gruiformes/Rallidae | American Woodcock | Apodiformes/Apodidae | Passeriformes/Corvidae |
| Order/Family/Common Name | Green-winged Teal | □Yellow Rail | Wilson's Phalarope | Chimney Swift | |
| Gaviiformes/Gaviidae | Canvasback | ●□Black Rail | Red-necked Phalarope | | Steller's Jay |
| Red-throated Loon | Redhead | ●■King Rail | Red Phalarope | White-throated Swift | Blue Jay |
| Pacific Loon | Ring-necked Duck | Virginia Rail | | Apodiformes/Trochilidae | Pinyon Jay |
| Common Loon | Greater Scaup | Sora | Charadriiformes/Laridae | Ruby-throated Hummingbird | |
| Podicipediformes/Podicipedidae | Lesser Scaup | Common Moorhen | Pomarine Jaeger | Broad-tailed Hummingbird | Black-billed Magpie |
| Pied-billed Grebe | | American Coot | Laughing Gull | Rufous Hummingbird | American Crow |
| Horned Grebe | Surf Scoter | | Franklin's Gull | Coraciiformes/Alcedinidae | Passeriformes/Alaudidae |
| Red-necked Grebe | White-winged Scoter | Gruiformes/Gruidae | Little Gull | Belted Kingfisher | Horned Lark |
| Eared Grebe | Black Scoter | Sandhill Crane | Bonaparte's Gull | Piciformes/Picidae | Passeriformes/Hirundinidae |
| Western Grebe | Long-tailed Duck | → Whooping Crane | Ring-billed Gull | Lewis's Woodpecker Red-headed Woodpecker | Purple Martin |
| Clark's Grebe | Bufflehead | Charadriiformes/Charadriidae | California Gull | | Tree Swallow |
| Pelecaniformes/Pelecanidae | Common Goldeneye | Black-bellied Plover | Herring Gull | Red-bellied Woodpecker | Violet-green Swallow |
| American White Pelican | Barrow's Goldeneye | American Golden-Plover | Thayer's Gull | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | Northern Rough-winged Sw. |
| Pelecaniformes/Phalacrocoracidae | Hooded Merganser | Snowy Plover | Iceland Gull | Red-naped Sapsucker | Bank Swallow |
| Double-crested Cormorant | Common Merganser | Semipalmated Plover | Lesser Black-backed Gull | Downy Woodpecker | Cliff Swallow |
| Ciconiiformes/Ardeidae | Red-breasted Merganser | Piping Plover | Glaucous Gull | Hairy Woodpecker | Barn Swallow |
| American Bittern | Ruddy Duck | Killdeer | Great Black-backed Gull | Northern Flicker | Passeriformes/Paridae |
| Least Bittern | Falconiformes/Accipitridae | Mountain Plover | Black-legged Kittiwake | ■Pileated Woodpecker | Black-capped Chickadee |
| Great Blue Heron | Osprey | Charadriiformes/Recurvirostridae | Sabine's Gull | Passeriformes/Tyrannidae | Tufted Titmouse |
| | Mississippi Kite | Black-necked Stilt | Caspian Tern | Olive-sided Flycatcher | Passeriformes/Sittidae |
| Great Egret | Bald Eagle | American Avocet | Common Tern | Western Wood-Pewee | Red-breasted Nuthatch |
| Snowy Egret | Northern Harrier | Charadriiformes/Scolopacidae | Forster's Tern | Eastern Wood-Pewee | White-breasted Nuthatch |
| Little Blue Heron | Sharp-shinned Hawk | Greater Yellowlegs | Least Tern | Yellow-bellied Flycatcher | Pygmy Nuthatch |
| Cattle Egret | Cooper's Hawk | Lesser Yellowlegs | Black Tern | Acadian Flycatcher | Passeriformes/Certhiidae |
| Green Heron | Northern Goshawk | Solitary Sandpiper | Columbiformes/Columbidae | Alder Flycatcher | Brown Creeper |
| Black-crowned Night-Heron | Red-shouldered Hawk | Willet | Rock Dove | Willow Flycatcher | Passeriformes/Troglodytidae |
| Yellow-crowned Night-Heron | Broad-winged Hawk | Spotted Sandpiper | ■ Eurasian Collared-Dove | Least Flycatcher | Rock Wren |
| Ciconiiformes/Threskiornithidae | Swainson's Hawk | Upland Sandpiper | ▶ □White-winged Dove | •Cordilleran Flycatcher | Carolina Wren |
| White-faced Ibis Ciconfiformes/Cathartidae | Red-tailed Hawk | Whimbrel | Mourning Dove | Eastern Phoebe | Bewick's Wren |
| | Ferruginous Hawk | Long-billed Curlew | Cuculiformes/Cuculidae | Say's Phoebe | House Wren |
| Turkey Vulture | Rough-legged Hawk | Hudsonian Godwit | Black-billed Cuckoo | Great Crested Flycatcher | Winter Wren |
| Anseriformes/Anatidae | Golden Eagle | Marbled Godwit | Yellow-billed Cuckoo | Cassin's Kingbird | Sedge Wren |
| Greater White-fronted Goose | Falconiformes/Falconidae | Ruddy Turnstone | Strigiformes/Tytonidae | Western Kingbird | Marsh Wren |
| Snow Goose | American Kestrel | Red Knot | Barn Owl | Eastern Kingbird | Passeriformes/Regulidae |
| Ross's Goose | Merlin | Sanderling | Strigiformes/Strigidae | Scissor-tailed Flycatcher | |
| Canada Goose | ♦□Gyrfalcon | Semipalmated Sandpiper | Eastern Screech-Owl | Passeriformes/Laniidae | Golden-crowned Kinglet |
| Trumpeter Swan | Peregrine Falcon | Western Sandpiper | Great Horned Owl | Loggerhead Shrike | Ruby-crowned Kinglet |
| Tundra Swan | Prairie Falcon | Least Sandpiper | Snowy Owl | Northern Shrike | Passeriformes/Sylviidae |
| Wood Duck | Galliformes/Phasianidae | White-rumped Sandpiper | Burrowing Owl | Passeriformes/Vireonidae | Blue-gray Gnatcatcher |
| Gadwall | Gray Partridge | Baird's Sandpiper | Barred Owl | ■ White-eyed Vireo | Passerifarmes/Turdidae |
| Eurasian Wigeon | Ring-necked Pheasant | Pectoral Sandpiper | Long-eared Owl | Bell's Vireo | Eastern Bluebird |
| American Wigeon | Sharp-tailed Grouse | Petolal Sandpiper | Short-eared Owl | | Mountain Bluebird |
| American Black Duck | Greater Prairie-Chicken | Stilt Sandpiper | Northern Saw-whet Owl | Yellow-throated Vireo | Townsend's Solitaire |
| Mallard | Wild Turkey | Buff-breasted Sandpiper | Caprimulgiformes/Caprimulgidae | Plumbeous Vireo | Veery |
| Blue-winged Teal | Galliformes/Odontophoridae | Short-billed Dowitcher | Common Nighthawk | Cassin's Vireo | Gray-cheeked Thrush |
| Cinnamon Teal | Northern Bobwhite | Long-billed Dowitcher | Common Poorwill | Blue-headed Vireo | Swainson's Thrush |
| Northern Shoveler | TOTALETH BOOWING | Common Snipe | • Chuck-will's-widow | Warbling Vireo | Hermit Thrush |
| | | Common Simple | • Whip-poor-will | Philadelphia Vireo | Wood Thrush |
| 11 | The state of the s | | | Red-eyed Vireo | (51) |
| 4 | 0 | 8 | 7 | , | 1, |
| | (<i>X</i> | U | 5 | 16 | 16 |
| | | Children State Control | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

35

No.

| Passeriformes/Turdidae, (cont) American Robin Uvaried Thrush Passeriformes/Mimidae Gray Catbird Northern Mockingbird Sage Thrasher Brown Thrasher Passeriformes/Sturnidae European Starling Passeriformes/Motacillidae American Pipit Sprague's Pipit Passeriformes/Bombycillidae Bohemian Waxwing Cedar Waxwing Passeriformes/Parulidae Blue-winged Warbler Golden-winged Warbler Tennessee Warbler Orange-crowned Warbler Northern Parula Yellow Warbler Northern Parula Yellow Warbler Cape May Warbler Cape May Warbler Warbler Wagnolia Warbler Townsend's Warbler Black-throated Blue Warbler Yellow-rumped Warbler Townsend's Warbler Black-throated Green Warbler Black-broated Green Warbler Black-broated Warbler Drine Warbler Black-boll Warbler Drine Warbler Black-and-white Warbler Black-and-white Warbler Drine Warbler Black-and-white Warbler Worm-eating Warbler Worm-eating Warbler Ovenbird Northern Waterthrush Kentucky Warbler MacGillivray's Warbler | Common Yellowthroat Hooded Warbler Wilson's Warbler Canada Warbler Yellow-breasted Chat Passeriformes/Thraupidae Summer Tanager Scarlet Tanager Western Tanager Passeriformes/Emberizidae Green-tailed Towhee Spotted Towhee Cassin's Sparrow American Tree Sparrow Chipping Sparrow Chipping Sparrow Clay-colored Sparrow Field Sparrow Vesper Sparrow Lark Sparrow Lark Sparrow Grasshopper Sparrow Henslow's Sparrow LeConte's Sparrow LeConte's Sparrow Melson's Sharp-tailed Sp. Fox Sparrow Lincoln's Sparrow White-throated Sparrow Harris's Sparrow White-throated Sparrow Dark-eyed Junco McCown's Longspur Lapland Longspur Snow Bunting Passepiformes/Cardinalidae Northern Cardinal Rose-breasted Grosbeak Blue Grosbeak | Passeriformes/Icteridae Bobolink Red-winged Blackbird Eastern Meadowlark Western Meadowlark Yellow-headed Blackbird Rusty Blackbird Ommon Grackle Great-tailed Grackle Brown-headed Cowbird Orchard Oriole Baltimore Oriole Bullock's Oriole Passeriformes/Fringillidae Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch Prine Grosbeak Purple Finch Cassin's Finch House Finch NOTES: | Med Crossbill White-winged Crossbill Common Redpoll Pine Siskin American Goldfinch Evening Grosbeak Passeriformes/Passeridae House Sparrow Additional Sightings Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (address on front page) also desires birders' observations on the following 2 species: Mute Swan - Please report sightings and nests of FREE FLYING BIRDS ONLY Eskimo Curlew - Report all sightings. | N.O.U. FIELD CARD OF NEBRASKA BIRDS DATE: |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| 16 | 14 | ======================================= | | FUNDING FROM THE NONGAME WILDLIFE INCOME TAX CHECKOFF. |
| | | | | |