

# The Burrowing Owl

April  
2025

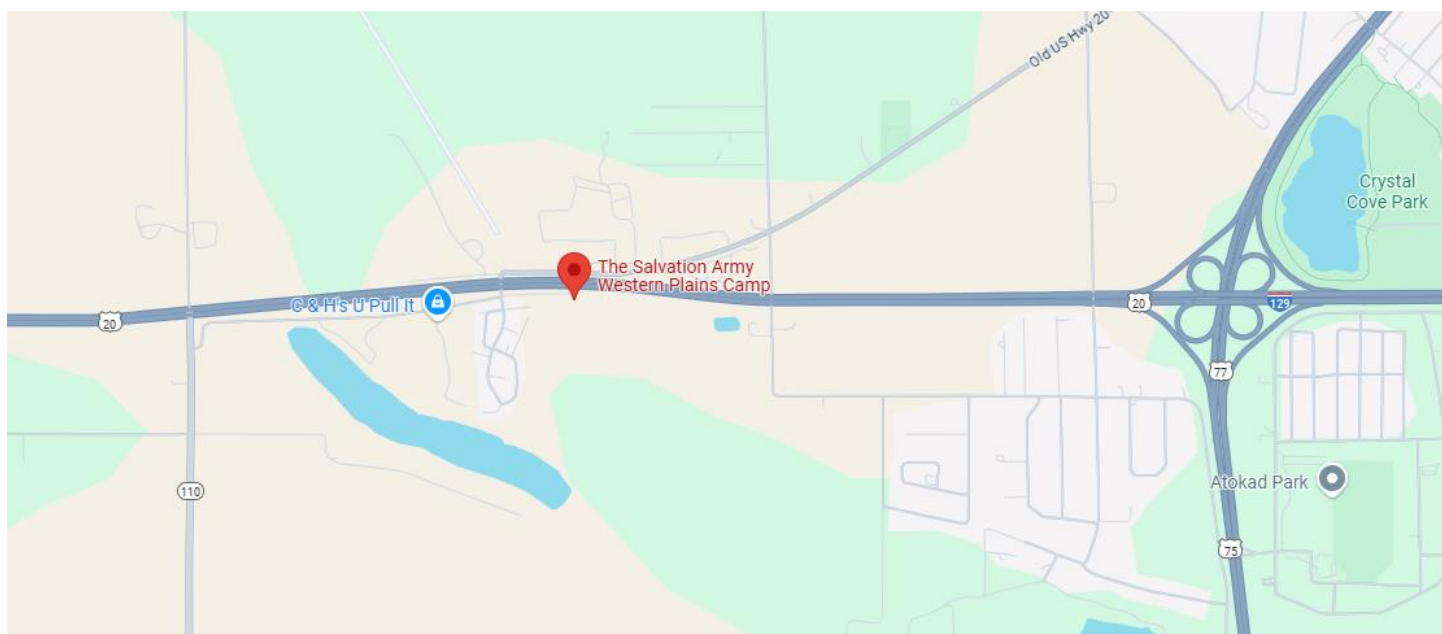
A Publication of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union

Dedicated to the study, appreciation, and protection of birds

## Tri-state meeting with IOU and SDOU coming up fast

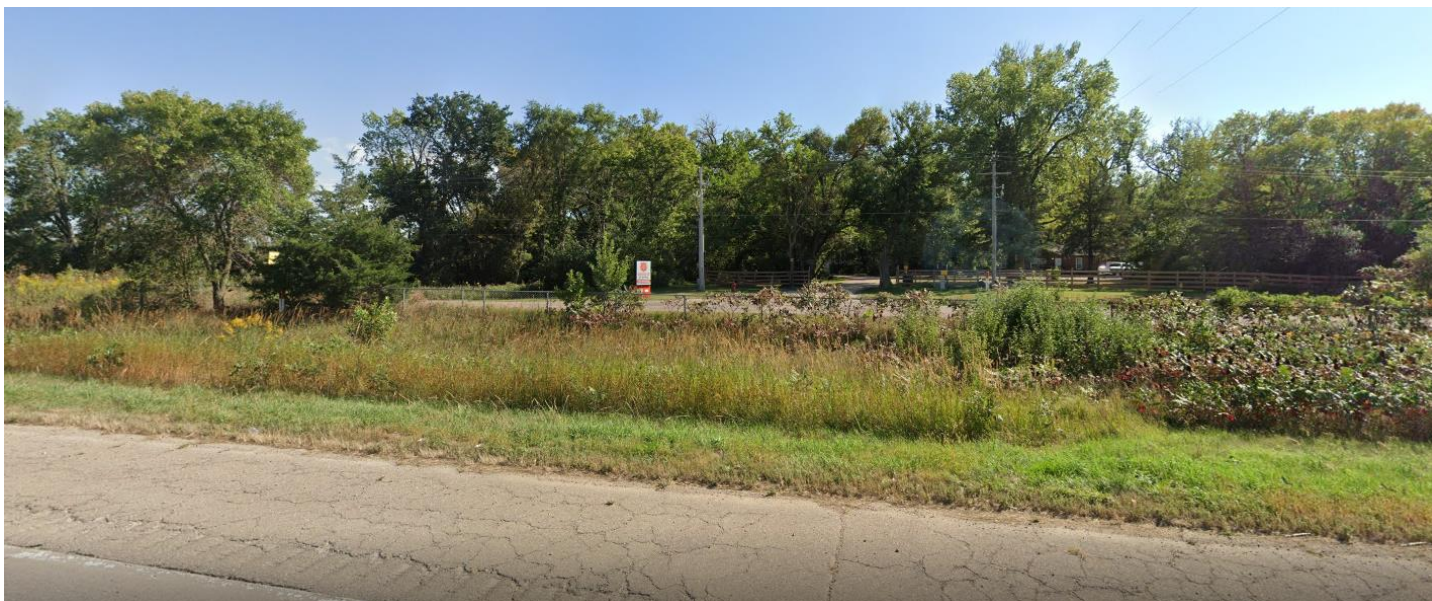
If last year's spring meeting (125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Lincoln) wasn't big enough, the spring meeting this year may even be bigger and more exciting, if that is even possible. We are having a joint meeting with the Iowa and South Dakota Ornithologists' Unions in South Sioux City 16-18 May. The meeting will be held at the Salvation Army Western Plains Camp located at 570 152nd St, South Sioux City, NE 68776.

While the meeting location will be in Nebraska, there will be field trips in all three states. Thus, folks will not only have the opportunity to add a few county ticks in Nebraska but also state ticks in nearby Iowa and South Dakota. Furthermore, it will be a tremendous opportunity to make new friends from adjacent states. Saturday evening will feature a keynote by Nebraska's own Michael Forsberg (<https://www.michaelforsberg.com/>). Michael is a celebrated photographer, author, and conservationist who has dedicated over three decades to capturing and telling the story of wildlife and conservation in the Great Plains through his work. He has very recently published a new book, *Into Whooperland*, that tells the story of the endangered Whooping Crane. Copies of the book will be available during the meeting!



The Salvation Army Western Plains Camp is located on Highway 20 just west of Highway 77 and Highway 20 interchange. The entrance to the camp is not obvious. Therefore, below is a photo of what that entrance looks like from Highway 20. Registration is available online and is only available on the IOU website. The link is here: <https://iowabirds.org/IOU/Meetings/NextMeeting.aspx>





There is no one hotel for the meeting, so individuals must make lodging plans on their own. Below is a list of options.

**Sioux City, Iowa:**

Stoney Creek Inn (close to Hard Rock Casino 300 3rd St. SC, Iowa (712) 234-1100  
Hard Rock Casino 111 3rd St, SC, Iowa. (844) 222-7625  
Hilton Garden Inn 1132 Larsen Park Rd., SC, Iowa (712) 255-4200

**South part of Sioux City, Iowa (along highway 20 convenient to meeting site)**

Hampton Inn and Suites 5555 Sergeant Road, SC, Iowa (712) 587-6984  
Super 8 2530 Singing Hills Blvd, SC, Iowa (712) 522-4573  
Wingate by Wyndham 4716 Southern Hills Dr. SC, Iowa (712) 276-5600  
Staybridge Suites 5410 Sergeant Rd SC, Iowa (712) 244-5333  
New Victorian Inn and Suites 3101 Singing Hills Blvd, SC, Iowa (712) 233-2302  
Comfort Inn 4202 S. Lakeport St., SC, Iowa (712) 560-4130  
Candlewood Suites 4720 Southern Hills Drive, SC, Iowa (712) 271-2222

**North Sioux City, South Dakota**

Hampton Inn 101 Sodrac Dr., NSC, South Dakota (605) 232-9739  
Holiday Inn Express 885 Cottonwood Ln, Dakota Dunes, SD (605) 206-2610  
Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, 151 Tower Rd. Dakota Dunes, SD (605) 232-3500  
Days Inn by Wyndham 1311 River Drive, NSC, South Dakota (605) 232-3366

In addition, students hoping to attend may apply for a scholarship to cover partial meeting and travel costs. For more information, interested students should contact NOU President Paul Pearson at [propearson@gmail.com](mailto:propearson@gmail.com).

**CUT OFF DATE:** Registration that includes meals must be completed by 8 May. Individuals hoping to attend the meeting without meals may do so up to the meeting date.



# Prothonotary Warblings

04/02/2025

Paul L. Pearson, Ph.D., President, N.O.U.

eBird: propearson; email: [propearson@gmail.com](mailto:propearson@gmail.com)

## NOU Needs Your Help!

NOU's biggest need is for someone to become the Treasurer, as Jan Johnson has decided to step away after a long and distinguished tenure. This position is critical to the function of our organization, and we do not yet have a nominee. We do have a likely nominee for the position of Librarian being vacated by Anita Breckbill, but we still need TWO 5-year members to join the Nominating Committee ASAP so that we can identify and officially nominate new officers in May.

A huge, huge thank you and our warmest wishes go out to both Jan and Anita for their many years of service as NOU officers!!



Please also like, share often, and post on the NOU Facebook Page. I've been adding and sharing more content to boost the visibility and engagement of the page. As we pile up more clicks and likes, it will mean more members joining NOU and becoming part of our Nebraska birding community. [Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Facebook Page](#)

## Nebraska Birding Discord Server

A Discord Server for Nebraska Birding has been created to serve as a messaging platform for Nebraska birders. It offers various channels to talk about birding, photography, rare sightings, traveling, and more. Join today to connect with birders across the state and be in the know about upcoming events, opportunities, and rare sightings! -Tobin & Keegan Brown

1. Download the Discord app or go to this link to set up an account. [Discord - Group Chat That's All Fun & Games](#)
2. Get an invitation to the Nebraska Birding Server. Admins Tobin and Keegan Brown or any of the 40+ members can send you an invite link (ask your birding circles) or email me at the address above.
3. Join, introduce yourself and use this new resource! Discord is a messaging app with perpetual chats that allow for rapid sharing of information, evolving content and is being used by birding groups in many other states.

## 2025 Big Year – First Quarter Leaders

The 2025 Nebraska 300 Big Year is well underway with some very fine rarities, so it's time to review the Q1 scores and reports. It's no secret that Tobin Brown is going for even bigger numbers this year on the heels of his remarkable 325 species "rookie" campaign in 2024. Starting off hot on January 1 (see below), he is slightly ahead of pace with Paul





Dunbar's 347 mark from 2013, despite the absence of some winter irruptive species. You can follow his progress and his blog posts at these links below: <https://brobin.me/big-year> and <https://brobin.me/blog> Go Tobin!

As of 4/8/25 and 199 species reported, here are the Top 5 in the eBird standings. Migration is heating up and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Nebraska Birding Bowl is almost here!

1. Tobin Brown - 170
2. Dave Cunningham - 139
3. Larry Einemann - 135
4. Keegan Brown - 134
5. Jacob Cooper - 130

## Big Birds of 2025 (so far).....Common Crane appropriately named?

A few of last year's rarities hung around to join the "best birds so far" list of 2025. Couch's Kingbird (North Platte, Lincoln Co.), Eurasian Wigeon (Lake Ogallala, Keith Co.), Barrow's Goldeneye (North Platte Water Treatment Plant, Lincoln Co) and yet another Brant from Jacob "Brantman" Cooper (Kearney, Buffalo Co) were New Year's Day beauties. Jacob also found a January 2nd Orange-crowned Warbler...not a rare species, but only the 7<sup>th</sup> Nebraska winter record (Buffalo Co). Tobin and Keegan Brown added a surprise 8<sup>th</sup> Spring record Pacific Loon at Sutherland Reservoir (Lincoln Co) on March 1<sup>st</sup> that hung out for 2-3 days before a big winter storm presumably sent it flapping.

## NOU's Next Scheduled Meetings

Spring meeting: South Sioux City with the IOU and SDOU, 16-18 May 2025

Fall Meeting: Ogallala, Ogallala, 26-28 Sep 2025

## New Members

Darcy Lindsey, Kearney; Jeff and Esther Smith, Omaha; Dylan Teut, Seward

## Moving?

If you are changing your address, **please** update it by logging into the NOU website or by sending a note to Jan Johnson at [janbirder@gmail.com](mailto:janbirder@gmail.com). Copies of the *Nebraska Bird Review* sent to defunct addresses are costing the NOU unnecessary postage.



"You looking for me?" Common Crane, 3/24/25 Keith Co NE by Tobin Brown



Sandhill and Whooping Crane migration through Nebraska gets all the press, but will the Common Crane become a low-key Nebraska specialty for ABA Listers? Listed as an American Birding Association (ABA) Code 4-Casual, it's a) rare enough to show up on the alerts with the 'mega' rarities b) a REALLY good bird and c) Nebraska and South Dakota have the only ABA records in 2025. It is also listed as "casual" (2-7 of the last 10 years) by the NOU Records Committee. However, due to a combination of observer skill, luck, fortunate location and forces we may never understand, Nebraska birders have documented sightings 5 of the past 7 years, see [COMMON CRANE – Birds of Nebraska – Online](#).

This be a record-setting year for Common Crane in NE, topping the 2 (maybe 3) birds in 2021. The first one was found by Andrew Furman near Grand Island on 3/17 (Merrick Co across the river from the 2023 location). A second bird near Gibbon on 3/23 (Buffalo Co) could be the same bird found near Elm Creek 3/28-3/31 (Buffalo Co). Much farther west the crane at Clear Creek WMA 3/24-3/28 (Keith Co) stood out in a smaller crowd of Sandhills giving the closest looks and pics (see photo) from the comfort of a picnic table. We'll never know for sure, but were there 3, 4 or even more? How many others were out there hiding in those record-breaking flocks of Sandhill Cranes? Will Nebraska birders continue to find them (nearly) annually and raise the profile of this rarity?

## **Call for Abstracts-Scientific Poster Session for Spring Tri-State Meeting!!**

With the help of Dr. Jacob Cooper, Asst. Professor at University of Nebraska-Kearney, we are sponsoring a Scientific Poster Session on Friday May 16 at the Tri-State Spring Meeting. This is a 'new' addition to one of our meetings, but a concept that takes NOU back to its roots as a scientific society. Please feel free to post, share or otherwise boost the following info and link!

The Ornithologists' Unions of Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota invite ornithological researchers from academia, government, and non-government organizations to submit Abstracts for the Tri-State Spring Meeting in South Sioux City, NE on May 16-18.

A Scientific Poster Session on Friday May 16 during the light dinner and social will allow researchers and attendees an opportunity to discuss their research. Abstracts will be published in the Nebraska Bird Review and student presenters will have their meeting registration fees waived.

Deadline is 4/30/25 for submission of Abstracts to [nebraska.ornithologists.union@gmail.com](mailto:nebraska.ornithologists.union@gmail.com)  
More info can be found at this link: [CallForAbstracts\\_Spring2025\\_TriStateMeeting](#)

## **And finally...**

Thanks to the Bellevue/Ralston Rotary Club for inviting me to give a presentation on "NOU and Birding" on March 31 in Bellevue, NE. Following an intro to birding and a little NOU history, they saw some great pictures of Sarpy County birds borrowed from Phil Swanson and Mary Clausen's collections (thanks also to Dan Leger and Thane Dinsdale for the use of their slide decks). If you know of an organization or group that would like a presentation, or you'd like to give one, get in touch with me. Again, more outreach means more members! Thanks to Jeff and Esther Smith for both the invitation and for joining NOU that day!! Welcome to you and other new members this year: Rita Cunha, Mike Roffman, Cody McGregor and Dylan Teut.

Until next issue, Bird how you wanna Bird...mindfully.



**P.S.** If it STILL isn't clear...I want audience participation. You can see the email address above, right? Don't make me hand out assignments, because I will!

Please send me your comments, questions, feedback, recommendations, goals/milestones, Nemesis Birds, Spark birds, Target birds, profiles of yourself and/or fellow NOU members(!), or tales of Nebraska birding gone great or totally awry. New members, introduce yourselves. Long-time members...PLEASE share your stories or your best checklists from decades past.



### **The Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Board**

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