



Sandhill Cranes and Chickens on the Prairie

Nebraska's Wildlife Spectacles

March 23-27, 2010

**Registration deadline:
February 26, 2010**

Nebraska in late March is the battleground between spring and winter. With these first winds of spring arrive hundreds of thousands of Sandhill Crane. Riverside farmland is transformed into crane feeding and dancing grounds, and the Platte itself becomes their night-time roost. This annual staging of half a million cranes along the Platte River is one of North America's greatest wildlife spectacles. The croaking calls of the Sandhill Cranes, one of the wildest sounds in North America, will take you back to a pre-historic time. Use a blind along the river to closely view cranes leaving their roost in the morning and coming back in the evening. Trip leader is Joe Sebastiani, Delaware Nature Society's Members Program Team Leader and experienced birder and naturalist, on his fifth trip to the Platte for this migration spectacle.

Much of the trip, however, will be spent in the beautiful and remote Sandhill region of Nebraska, America's last great prairie ecosystem. Spend three nights at a 12,000-acre ranch to see Greater Prairie Chicken and Sharp-tailed Grouse on their display grounds at very close range. The Sandhill region is the "real" Nebraska...rolling prairie as far as you can see, abundant wildlife, and very few people.

Enjoy areas around the Calamus Reservoir while we look for waterfowl, American White Pelicans, many species of birds and other species of wildlife such as Mule Deer, Prairie Dogs, and Coyotes. Take leisurely walks through the trails and paths of the ranch to appreciate the natural beauty of the Nebraska Sandhill prairie region.

Our hosts will guide us on a four-wheel drive expedition deep into Sandhill country to visit remote wetlands and get far from paved roads while we look for wildlife.

For the story and photos of our 2009 trip, visit www.delawarenaturesociety.org/blog and search “Nebraska”. Make sure you read the posts in date order!

Itinerary

Tuesday, March 23 – Meet in Omaha, Nebraska and travel by van to Burwell. Lodging and dinner will be at Calamus Outfitters. Enjoy an evening walk to listen for owls and coyotes.

Wednesday, March 24 – Wake early to see the dancing of Greater Prairie-chicken at first light. This is a magical experience that you will treasure, as you will witness males displaying, dancing, booming, and fighting at close range. Bring your camera! After a hearty breakfast, tour around the 12,000-acre family ranch and Calamus Reservoir to look for migrant waterfowl, raptors, and many other species of birds including American White Pelican. Visit a prairie dog town and overlook a Bald Eagle nest. After dinner, take an optional owl/coyote walk.



By: Joe Sebastiani

Thursday, March 25 – Wake early again to get close and personal with the Sharp-tailed Grouse. At the southern end of their range, this is another chicken of the prairie. The dance is different than the Prairie-chicken, and involves lots of running, stooping, and stomping of feet, with a little less leaping. You’ll love it! After breakfast, our host family will lead us on a trek deep into Sandhill country to visit remote wetlands among an endless sea of rolling hills and prairie grass. This unique opportunity is something that few visitors to this area experience.

Friday, March 26 – After breakfast, travel to the Funk Waterfowl Production Area in south-central Nebraska. This federal wildlife refuge hosts thousands of geese and ducks at this time of year as well as raptors and early shorebirds such as the Baird’s Sandpiper. Check in to the hotel in Kearney, have an early dinner, then visit the Rowe Audubon Sanctuary for an evening with the Sandhill Crane, make that tens of thousands of them! Watch them return to the Platte River for the night from a blind literally on the river. Cross your fingers that we have a nice sunset.

Saturday, March 27 – Wake early to visit the cranes again as they wake up and fly off for the day. This is the time when you will see more interaction, communication, displaying, and loud calling among the cranes. Afterwards depart for Omaha for our return flight home.

Price

PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

- Delaware Nature Society Members: \$980/person

- Non-Members: \$1,035

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$150

INCLUDES

- Leadership by Joe Sebastiani, Delaware Nature Society
 - Fees for Crane, Prairie-chicken, and grouse blind experiences
- Ground transportation in Nebraska
- Double occupancy lodging with private bath; 1 night at a hotel, 3 nights at Calamus Outfitters.
- Snacks, beverages, breakfasts, lunches (except first day), and dinners (except one), some alcoholic beverages.

NOT INCLUDED

- Airfare to Omaha, Nebraska. Before booking your flights, contact trip leader Joe Sebastiani at 302-239-2334, ext. 115 or email joe@delawarenaturesociety.org.

To Reserve Space and Cancellation Policy

Full payment is required by February 26, 2010 and is payable by check or credit card with the form below or by registering on-line at www.delawarenaturesociety.org if you are a Delaware Nature Society member.

Cancellation Policy: After February 26, a refund will be given only if a replacement participant is found.

Liability

The Delaware Nature Society acts only as your agent in arranging the various accommodations which are made available and assumes no responsibility or liability in connection with the service of any motorcoach, train, vessel, carriage, aircraft or other conveyance, excursions, sight-seeing, restaurant and hotel accommodations used in the performance of this tour. In the event it becomes necessary or advisable, or for any reason whatsoever, to alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made. Additional expense, if any, shall be borne by the passenger. All prices quoted herein are based on current fares and subject to change.

QUESTIONS? Call 302-239-2334, extension 115

Mail registration with check to Delaware Nature Society, P.O. Box 700, Hockessin, DE 19707 or simply register at www.delawareaturesociety.org if you are a Delaware Nature Society member.

2010 Sandhill Crane Migration Registration Form

Enclosed is \$_____ for the Delaware Nature Society's Sandhill Crane Migration trip

Enclosed is \$_____ for a Nature Society _____ membership
College student \$30 Senior citizen \$30 Individual \$40 Household \$55 Household Plus \$85
Protector \$150 Protector \$500 Guardian \$1000+

Credit Card: Visa Mastercard AMEX Discover

Checks made out to: Delaware Nature Society

Credit card #: _____ Expiration date: _____ (mm/yy)
_____ 3 digit Security Code (from back of card)

Authorized signature: _____

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone (____) _____

E mail _____