



## Join the Migration to Kearney, Nebraska

### NABS Conference, March 11-15, 2020

**W**hat is the most impressive sight you've seen? If you've ever visited Kearney, Nebraska, in March, your answer might be viewing 80 percent of the world's Sandhill Cranes converged upon one 80-mile stretch of land. Yes, that's right — 500,000 cranes visit the central Platte River every spring to fuel up on grain from nearby cornfields in preparation for the long journey to their Arctic and sub-Arctic nesting grounds.

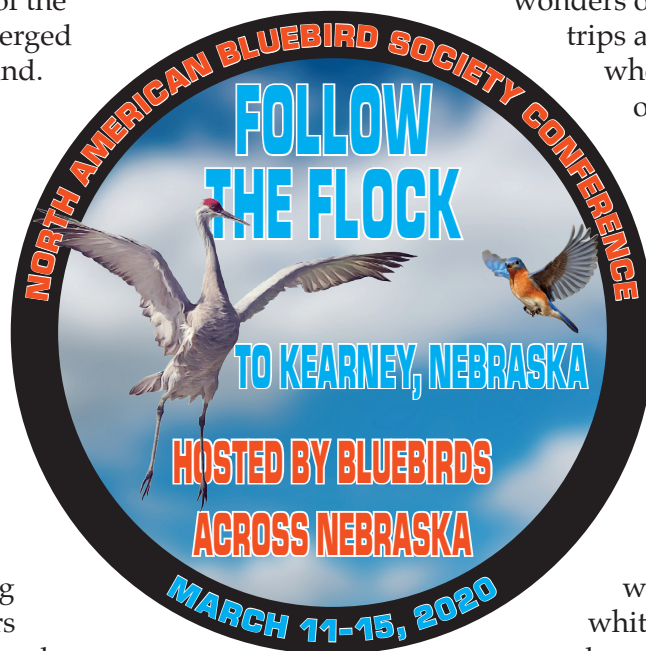
This epic migration of the cranes — a species that has existed since the Eocene 34 million years ago — represents one of the world's great natural spectacles, luring more than 70,000 birdwatchers from every state in the union and 47 countries annually to the Kearney, Nebraska, area.

This picturesque landscape makes for the perfect backdrop to the North American Bluebird Society's March 11-15, 2020, conference in Kearney. Hosted by Bluebirds Across Nebraska, attendees will enjoy

crane viewing led by experienced staff and volunteers at the National Audubon Society's Rowe Sanctuary to witness one of the great birding wonders of the world. Viewing blind trips are planned for the morning — when the cranes wake up and take off from the river sandbars — and evening — when they return to roost — so conference attendees are encouraged to experience both.

But spring in Nebraska isn't just about the cranes. According to Smithsonian.com, 20 million other migrating birds belonging to about 300 species stop along the Platte, including 280 of the world's remaining whooping cranes, 90 percent of white-fronted geese, thousands of endangered piping plovers, 30 percent of northern pintails, 50 percent of mallards, as well as bald eagles and about 2 million snow geese.

Attendees will have the option of seeing many of these during our birding field trip or to learn more about Nebraska through our Prairie Culture tour.



The birding field trip will include:

- Viewing Prairie Chickens through spotting scopes and binoculars.
- A visit to the Funk Lagoons rainwater basin to see waterfowl and other birds.
- A tour of Harlan Reservoir, which can feature waterfowl, eagles, snow geese and pelicans, depending on migration.
- A prairie dog village.



The birding field trip includes viewing Prairie Chickens.

The Prairie Culture tour will include stops at:

- The G.W. Frank Museum of History & Culture ([unk.edu/offices/frankhouse](http://unk.edu/offices/frankhouse)), one of the first electrified houses in the American West, it offers a window into Kearney's past, its early rise and fall, and rebirth as a center for health and education.
- The Archway ([archway.org](http://archway.org)), a museum that spans I-80 saluting the pioneers of the past.
- Museum of Nebraska Art ([mona.unk.edu](http://mona.unk.edu)), which celebrates visual artwork that reflects the state's culture.



The Prairie Culture tour includes a stop at the Archway monument and museum.

Lunch for both field trips will be at Burchell's White Hill Farmhouse Inn ([burchellfarmhouseinn.com](http://burchellfarmhouseinn.com)).

But wait, there's more! Much more! The conference also includes workshops, educational exhibits, live and silent auctions, a raffle, vendors, and fun socializing with new and old birding friends. Dinners on Friday and Saturday will include a cash bar. In addition to Friday's live auction, we'll also be entertained

Photo courtesy of the Nebraska Tourism Commission



Sandhill Cranes converge upon the Platte River

## Other Kearney-area attractions include:

- [Nebraska Firefighters Museum](#) — preserving the public's understanding of firefighting in regard to saving lives while enhancing fire prevention knowledge.
- [The Classic Car Collection](#) — featuring more than 200 vintage automobiles, it is billed as the best public car attraction between Chicago and Denver
- [Fort Kearny State Historical Park](#) — originally a safe haven for Overland Trail travelers, Pony Express riders and gold prospectors, it welcomes visitors to explore reconstructed buildings, including a stockade, parade grounds, powder magazine and blacksmith/carpenter shop.
- [Harold Warp Pioneer Village](#) — located in nearby Minden, its 50,000 historic items on display illustrating America's progress since 1830 makes it well worth the 22-mile trip from Kearney.

by Al Batt ([albatt.com](http://albatt.com)), Minnesota writer, speaker, storyteller and humorist. On Saturday, awards will be presented by NABS and BAN, with entertainment presented by Ron Cisar of Omaha, Nebraska. His program, "Earth Music," is a celebration of the Earth through song.

Our event speakers are sure to entertain and educate attendees. They include:

- Naturalist, wildlife photographer and field guide writer Stan Tekiela ([nauresmart.com](http://nauresmart.com)), who will present "Captivating Bluebirds."
- Julie Zickefoose's ([juliezickefoose.com](http://juliezickefoose.com)) talk will be based on her book, "Baby Birds: An Artist Looked Into the Nest."
- In addition to providing Friday night's entertainment, Al Batt will again lend his nature-related storytelling skills on Saturday.
- Bernie Daniels, NABS president, will discuss distribution and trends for the population of the three bluebird species based on data from the Breeding Bird Survey.
- Biologist, author, nature photographer and NABS Lifetime Achievement Award winner Myrna Pearman ([myrnapearman.com](http://myrnapearman.com)) will educate attendees on her experience transforming Ellis Bird Farm into an internationally renowned conservation, education and research center.
- A representative of Rowe Sanctuary ([rowe.audubon.org](http://rowe.audubon.org)) will discuss the Sandhill Cranes' annual migration.

The conference will occur at the Holiday Inn Convention Center, 110 S. 2nd Ave., Kearney, NE, 308-237-5971. When calling for hotel reservations, attendees should mention they are with the NABS/BAN conference to receive their room discount.

More details and registration information will be available at [nabluebirdsociety.org/conference](http://nabluebirdsociety.org/conference) or [bbne.org](http://bbne.org) as plans are finalized.