



Join the Migration to Kearney, Nebraska

NABS Conference, March 11-15, 2020

What 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.

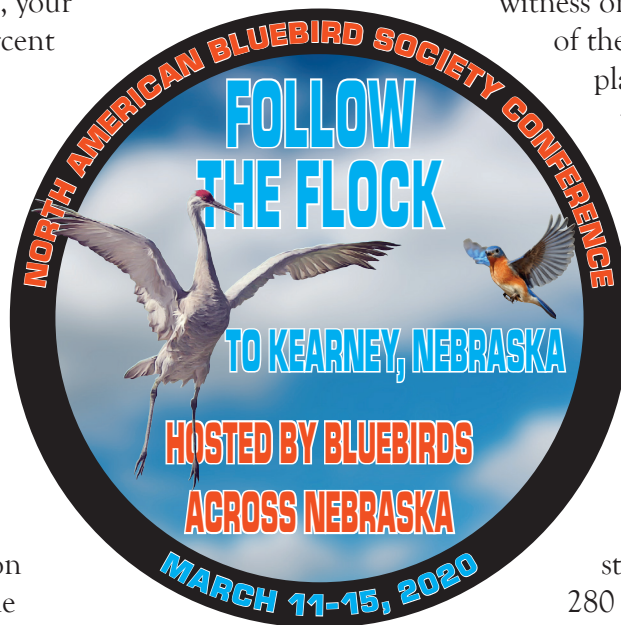
This epic migration of the cranes – a species that has existed since the Eocene 34 million years ago – represents one of the world's great natural spectacles, luring more than 70,000 birdwatchers from every state in the union and 47 countries annually to the Kearney, Nebraska, area.

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), 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), a museum that spans I-80 saluting the pioneers of the past.
- Museum of Nebraska Art (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).

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



Sandhill Cranes converge upon the Platte River

Save the date!

What: NABS 2020 Conference, hosted by Bluebirds Across Nebraska
When: March 11-15, 2020
Where: Holiday Inn Convention Center, Kearney, Nebraska (Call 308-237-5971 for reservations)

and Saturday will include a cash bar. In addition to Friday's live auction, we'll also be entertained by Al Batt (albatt.com), Minnesota writer, speaker, storyteller and humorist. On Saturday evening, awards will be presented by NABS, and entertainment will be provided 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 (naturesmart.com), who will present "Captivating Bluebirds."
- Writer, artist and naturalist Julie Zickefoose's (juliezickefoose.com) talk will be based on her latest book, "Saving Jemima, Life and Love With a Hard-luck Jay."
- In addition to providing Friday night's entertainment, Al Batt will again lend his nature-related storytelling skills on Saturday.
- Bernie Daniel, 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 and nature photographer Myrna Pearman (myrnapearman.com) will give a short history of Ellis Bird Farm, a conservation, research and education center. She will talk about how the natural assets of the old homestead have been used to address engaging children in nature.
- Bill Taddicken, director of Rowe Sanctuary's Iain Nicolson Audubon Center (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 form will soon be available on line at bbne.org and nabluebirdsociety.org/conference.