

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2011

From: Roger Jasnoch, Director Kearney Visitors Bureau

Phone: 308-233-4359

Rjasnoch@visitkearney.org

Bill Taddicken, Director Rowe Sanctuary

Phone: 308-468-5282

E-mail: billtaddicken@nctc.net

Platte River, Nebraska Named Top Wildlife Watching Spots

KEARNEY, Neb. – Two national magazines have recognized the Kearney area as a top birding and wildlife viewing destination. The Platte River was named one of the Top 10 Wildlife Watching Spots by the National Wildlife Federation in its Feb/March Magazine. Wildbird Magazine also named the Platte River as one of the Top 25 Birding sites in its March/April issue.

The National Wildlife Federation has fought to safeguard hundreds of habitats critical to sustaining the nation's wildlife. The Platte River is one of their top ten favorite destinations that provide exceptional opportunities to view wildlife.

This once again solidifies the impact the cranes make to individuals all over the World and to the economic impact of the Kearney area and the reason the City of Kearney proclaimed Kearney as Sandhill Crane Capital of the World in 2010. This migration would not be taking place at the level it is without the conservation efforts made by Audubon Society's Rowe Sanctuary near Gibbon. "This migration has been occurring for tens of thousands of years and is truly an amazing sight to witness," said Bill Taddicken, director of the Audubon Society's Rowe Sanctuary east of Kearney. "For birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts in general, this is definitely a must-see event."

Wildbird magazine asked its Advisory Board member, Pete Dunne, to compile a list of his favorite birding locations in terms of visitation, avocational acclaim, species diversity or the opportunity to see sought-after birds. Pete Dunne states, "The sight and sound of birds coming and going to roost will leave you speechless," Dunne said of the migration through the Kearney area. "Witness this spectacle; you will account it one of the greatest moments of your life. Miss it, and the only good news is you'll never appreciate the depths of your loss." Pete Dunne is an author of many books and is vice president of the New Jersey Audubon Society and director of its Cape May Bird Observatory.

Bird enthusiasts from around the World marvel at the sights and sounds of the migration. Numerous viewing opportunities are available, including roadside parking sites, hike-bike trails built over rustic railroad bridges, a wildlife sanctuary and educational center maintained by the National Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary and their crane cam via www.rowesanctuary.org.

In all, 80 percent of the world's sandhill cranes migrate through the Kearney area, but they are not the only species that rely upon Platte River roosting grounds and area wetlands. Rare whooping cranes, ducks, geese, shorebirds and eagles are among the other feathered species that crowd the Central Nebraska Flyway during February and March.