



Kenn Kaufman is a field editor for Audubon.

Ask Kenn Kaufman:

So many questions...

So little time...

Check out Audubon's Ask Kenn

What Bird Would You Ride If You Could?

Why do so many white birds have black wingtips?

The Common Swift Is No Longer the Fastest-Flying Animal

So what is? Might surprise you.

Click on link above, or go to

<https://www.audubon.org/news/the-common-swift-no-longer-fastest-flying-animal>

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS 66505-1932



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 48, No. 2 ~ October 2019

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Upcoming Events

Oct. 4-6 71st Meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society

Oct. 8 **TUESDAY 6:00** Board Meeting
Friends Rm. Manhattan Public Library

Oct. 12 Sat. morning birding 8:00 a.m.
Sojourner Truth Park

Oct. 24 BIRDSEED **ORDER** FORM received
Nov. 2- BIRDSEED **PICKUP** - UFM parking lot 8-11 a.m.

Oct. 28 Celebration of Cranes registration Deadline
Nov. 1-3 Celebration of Cranes Quivira NWR and AOK
<https://www.audubonofkansas.org/>



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

Those outer planets, Uranus and Neptune are scarcely ever mentioned here, for despite their great size they are almost always literally beyond naked-eye focus. However, if anyone wants to take up the challenge of seeing one of them without ocular assistance

(aside from eyeglasses or contact lenses), October 28th seems to offer an optimum opportunity for finding Uranus. It will be opposite the Sun from our point of view, and thus will be in the sky all night, offering a dim, fuzzy green-ish dot.

The Old Farmer's Almanac says it will be in Pisces, while Star-Date refers you to the neighboring western corner of Aries. If that's a puzzle, my planisphere suggests starting by locating the four small yet distinct stars that corner a wide area of starless sky to form the Great Square of Pegasus (the Flying Horse). As described, last month, they rather resemble the four corners of a dark vertical diamond as they rise but gradually level off as night progresses.

The Square's top two stars will point eastward about one and a half times their width to a brighter star called Hamal, an eye of Aries the Ram. Aries is looking westward with his nose represented by two lesser stars a little westward and south of Hamal. Uranus should be somewhere nearby.

In 1781 from England William Herschel spied it lurking in Gemini, the first planet discovered post ancient times. One might say it was discovered by smoke and mirrors, if for 'smoke' one means a huge wooden construct supporting a large barrel containing mirrors meticulously and repeatedly ground and polished, done with a lot of assistants, particularly his sister Carolyn. Probably the easiest of her contributions was to sit by open window and note down her brother's observations shouted down from the eye piece high on scaffolding where he could keep his night vision intact. The story of William, Caroline, et al. is a full one.

William wanted to name it "Georgium" for the king who contributed considerable money to William's projects, while it seems French astronomers, averse to anything English, were apparently willing to call it "Herschell" (he was born in Germany). Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn had all

been named for Roman gods, but in the end the Greek god of the entire sky, Ouranos, was admitted into the club, with a Latinized name. Another story.

Uranus, I read, is four times the size of the Earth and gaseously less dense. The Audubon Handbook says an object there would weigh only 79% as much as on Earth. And as Earth rotates on an axis tilted 23 1/2 degrees from vertical, Uranus's tilt is almost 98 degrees. That is, it travels its orbit basically on its side, but actually about eight degrees 'upside down'. With much more now known from modern observations.

As to the more visible planets, three show in the evening, this month. Venus stands briefly in the western sky as the evening star. Jupiter and Saturn set ever earlier in the evenings, Jupiter near the Moon on the 3rd, Saturn near the Moon on the 5th. Contrarily, Mars winks up in the pre-dawn hours before sunlight erases it.

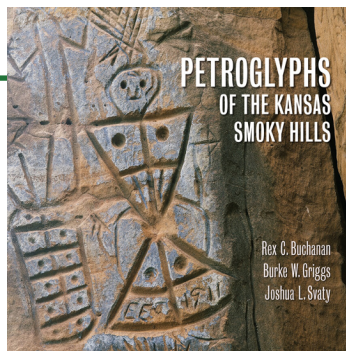
With the Moon as guide, Scorpius' reddish Antares can be found below the setting Moon on the 2nd. Taurus' bright Aldebaran will climb with the thick gibbous Moon the evenings of the 16th and 17th, first below to the left, next night above to the right. On the 23rd and 24th, Regulus in Leo makes the same maneuvers with a thin sickle Moon in the morning.

Actually, those three lights (and their constellations), while not foreigners here are sort of out-of-towners. Scorpius' mainstage is the summer sky, Taurus is a keystone of the winter sky, and Leo is a main attraction of spring. But the sky is wide and its display, as also referred to last month, is constantly passing. Scorpius gets to linger a bit as the early nights come on; the other two crash the all-night party during the wee hours. And during October nights it isn't only the Friends of Moon that are worth noting.

Pegasus, Aries, and Pisces have just been mentioned and they are just part of the main part of autumn's evening regalia. Pisces consists of a two not-too-big loops of dim stars, one loop east of Pegasus (toward Aries), the other located under the Great Square. They are connected by an L-shaped line of equally dim stars, and represent two lovers who, in need of escape, jumped into the sea, tying themselves together with a rope so they wouldn't become completely separated.

The Moon will be full the 13th at 4p08 and new the 27th at 10p38.

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Petroglyphs of the Kansas Smoky Hills

Rex Buchanan, Burke Griggs, and Joshua Svaty

Long before the coming of Euro-Americans, native inhabitants of what is now Kansas left their mark on the land: carvings in the soft orange and red sandstone of the states Smoky Hills. Though noted by early settlers, these carvings are little known—and, largely found on private property today, they are now rarely seen. In a series of photographs, Petroglyphs of the Kansas Smoky Hills offers viewers a chance to read the story that these carvings tell of the region's first people—and to appreciate an important feature of Kansas history and its landscape that is increasingly threatened by erosion and vandalism.

Now on sale at Claflin Books, 103 N. 4th St. Manhattan, KS 66502

Unintended Assets

Dru Clarke



The road north of our lane has been an 'attractive nuisance' for decades. Straight and bedded in dirt for some stretches, meandering and shoulderless in others, it is not graveled and is prone to revert to mud in low places. Mudders love it after a heavy rain and 'recreate' joyously, adrenalin-fed in trying to navigate its slippery surface. It's fine until they get stuck, then, thankfully for one of the advantages of cell phones, they call friends to bail



Photos by Dru Clarke

them out. This relieves us and our nearest neighbor, a mile away, from visits at 3 a.m. by chagrined and filthy riders. Recently five vehicles have gotten stuck in the last month, two of them pickups, the other three ATV's. One truck, driven by friends of ours, was simply out for a country Sunday drive and they believed they could negotiate the section that looked benign, but ended up sunk to their axles. Three hours later, with the aid of our skid steer loader and heavy chains, they were wrenched from the mud. We had a pleasant visit, fueled by beer, afterward. But the mishap gave us the opportunity to talk about the assets of the road and the surrounding landscape.

Because there is little traffic most of the time, regular folks daunted by the conditions prefer to travel by paved roads. So, our wildlife encounters are frequent and rich. Flanked by woodland, native grass pasture, a brome meadow and one soybean field (none of which can be accessed by landowners except by heavy equipment) and drained by several narrow streams and one of considerable volume, we are gifted with prairie bird and woodland bird sightings daily. Dickcissels and lark sparrows sing from the barbed wire fences, and red-tailed hawks scout the open skies. Occasionally the pair we've come to call 'ours' perch in a dead cottonwood high up, one facing one way and the other, the opposite. The woodland near the big creek is home to a family of redheaded woodpeckers. My husband spied a juvenile recently and thought it was a different species of bird, fooled by its dull brown head. Eastern bluebirds are common, their musical song rippling from treetops. The resident great blue heron comes and goes, and turkey vultures are quick to scavenge on invisible death beneath the trees and rise heavily from the undergrowth when we pass them by. Tracks in the mud of deer,

coyote, fox, fox squirrel, raccoon, opossum, and small rodents betray their nightly forays. Just last week, two mink brown voles, looking for all the world like tiny train cars, trundled across the road. Fuzzy, like pudgy caterpillars, they seemed to have some secret destination in mind as they steamed ahead. Adorable was the word that sprung to mind.

It has been designated a 'minimum maintenance' road, that being the equivalent of a dirt road, not given the status of gravel, that is 'maintained' twice a year. One treatment occurs at the beginning of hunting season (an interesting coincidence), the other, at the close of the school year. There have been suggestions to close the road, barricade it but not lock it up (that would be illegal), vacate it – something the neighbors will not tolerate – but no serious thought given to 'fixing' it so travel could be successfully completed from one end to the other. One doesn't have to be a hydrologic engineer to see that ditches- there are none in the worst spots- would facilitate drainage and grading of the surface to promote runoff. Mudders 'recreating' have been blamed for exacerbating damage, but that seems unfair as the sucking mud is already there. And they really do seem to be enjoying themselves.



It is fortunate for us as lovers of nature to live remotely and on a minimum maintenance road, and don't mind sharing it with other recreationists, be they ATV enthusiasts, birders, photographers, or folks just needing the solitude – the peace and quiet – for a while. The trash they leave behind we pick up on our daily runs, although we'd prefer that they pack it out. As long as we have egress from our front gate to the south, we won't complain too much, but think that folks who encounter an enticing country road should be able to complete their journey without fear of being inextricably mired in muck. And landowners should be able to access their fields. The road has more to offer than that.



Sept. 12

2019 Birdseed Sale/Fundraiser

ORDER by Oct. 24 2019 PICKUP date Nov. 2, 2019
return payment to: UFM Parking Lot
NFHAS 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
P.O. Box 1932
Manhattan, KS 66505 Checks payable to: NFHAS

Northern Flint Hills



Audubon Society
Manhattan, Kansas

CHEAP CHEEP MIX is less expensive but still attractive to many species. It is 40 % cracked corn, 40 % white proso millet, and 20 % black oil sunflower (with no milo or fillers).

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED CHIPS are high in energy and can be used in tube feeders. It is especially liked by pine Siskins. Hulled sunflower seed is consumed by a variety of birds, large- and small-beaked.

FINCH MIX consists of 50% sunflower chips and 50% thistle seed.

FLINT HILLS FEAST is the premium seed mix: 30% black oil sunflower seed, 20% striped sunflower seed, and 50% white proso millet (with no milo or fillers).

MEDIUM CHOP is chopped corn, a little finer and cleaned.

PEANUT PICKOUTS are chunks of peanut hearts and are very attractive to woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, titmice, jays, wrens, and more.

SAFFLOWER is a favorite with Cardinals, and squirrels really do not like it.

SUET CAKES, in addition to having other nutritious ingredients, the main ingredient is high calorie beef fat. It helps birds maintain body heat in cold winter months. Bird seed, berries and peanut butter are mixed in with suet. Enjoy woodpeckers, wrens, nuthatches, and chickadees.

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEEDS are the preferred seed of many small feeder birds and attractive to more species than are striped sunflower seeds. Black oil supplies more energy per pound than striped.

STRIPED SUNFLOWER SEEDS contain larger hearts than black oil sunflower seeds and are particularly suitable for larger songbirds.

THISTLE SEED is very attractive to Gold Finches and all other finches that are here over winter. It is excellent for tube feeders.

WHITE MILLET is a favorite of most small-beaked ground-feeding birds; Red millet is also readily eaten. Quail, doves, juncos, sparrows, towhees, cowbirds, and red-winged blackbirds are attracted to millet.

(Taken from Audubon At Home Bird Feeding Basics, <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>)

Sales Support Local Chapter Activities

As with all of our fund-raising activities, proceeds from our seed sales go toward supporting the educational and conservation projects of the local chapter. All of our labor is voluntary. Taxes are included in the price of our seed. Even though we are a not-for-profit organization, we are required to pay tax on any retail sales. Any additional donation you may wish to include with your order is appreciated.

Quality Seed, Easy Handling

The products we offer are high quality seeds. Our mixes were created to satisfy the needs of local bird populations at reasonable costs. We have tried to make it easy for you to purchase the amount of seed you want without having to handle heavy, awkward bags. Our seed comes in 10, 25, and 50 pound bags. We try to obtain the seed in paper bags whenever possible.

Volunteers welcome! Help unload the delivery truck at 7:45 a.m. and/ or volunteer throughout the morning.

TYPE	Unit (lb bags)	Price/unit	number	TOTAL COST
Black oil sunflower				
	10	\$7.50		
	25	\$15.00		
	50	\$27.50		
Striped sunflower				
	10	\$8.25		
	25	\$17.50		
	50	\$32.25		
Flint hills feast				
	10	\$5.00		
	25	\$11.75		
	50	\$21.50		
Cheap-cheap blend				
	10	\$5.00		
	25	\$11.00		
	50	\$19.00		
Sunflower chips				
	10	\$18.50		
	25	\$37.50		
Thistle				
	10	\$20.50		
	25	\$45.50		
Finch mix				
	10	\$19.50		
	25	\$39.00		
Safflower				
	10	\$10.00		
	25	\$23.50		
White millet				
	10	\$5.00		
	25	\$10.00		
	50	\$18.50		
Red millet				
	10	\$7.50		
	25	\$15.75		
	50	\$28.25		
Peanut pickouts (shelled peanuts)				
	10	\$15.00		
	25	\$35.00		
Medium corn chop				
	25	\$11.00		
	50	\$20.00		
suet cake				
	ea	\$1.50		

Delivery service available – Manhattan city limits – Please include addt'l \$5.

COMPLETE this portion and return with payment.

Name

Address

Phone

e-mail

SUBTOTAL: _____

DELIVERY: _____

DONATION: _____

TOTAL: _____

**Checks payable to:
Northern Flint Hills Audubon
Society or (NFHAS)**

Celebration of Cranes 2019

Sponsored by Audubon of Kansas at the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

Six tours are planned (Nov. 1,2,3) this year. Early morning hours starting at dawn and sunrise are the best times to view Sandhill Cranes and Whooping Cranes, waterfowl and many other birds and wildlife. The cranes and waterfowl (particularly geese) leave their night roosting areas to feed in agricultural fields surrounding the refuge. They usually return in greatest numbers near sunset and dusk. There will be other waterfowl of course. We will have spotting scopes and share binoculars at the main viewing areas (usually near the north end of refuge), but participants are encouraged to bring their own. There is no guarantee the Whooping cranes will be present, but historically this is a good time.

This year we are excited to have three experts giving presentations:

Rex Buchanan, Director Emeritus, Kansas Geological Survey. "Water and Geology at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge." Buchanan and Jim McCauley co-authored the book "Roadside Kansas," a guide to geological landmarks across the state. After 37 years with the Kansas Geological Survey, interim director Rex Buchanan retired in June 2016.

Anne Lacy, Crane Research Coordinator. "The Trumpet in the Orchestra of Evolution: The Story of the Sandhill Crane in North America." After completion of her M.S., Anne accepted a full-time position at International Crane Foundation (ICF) as a research associate in the Field Ecology Department (now the North America Program), working on an ongoing long-term study of Sandhill Cranes. She began working with the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership in 2009 to study the **ecology of the newly reintroduced Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin.**

Elizabeth H. Smith, Ph.D. International Crane Foundation, "A Long and Narrow Flyway: Whooping Cranes and Trans-continental Migration." North America Program Director and Texas Whooping Crane Program Leader, International Crane Foundation. The Texas coast plays an integral role in the recovery of this federally endangered species, as the Whooping Crane relies on large expanses of quality coastal habitat each winter within and around Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Her research on sea-level rise and storm surge on coastal habitat change is critical to promote community advocacy for conservation planning and protection.

Refuge staff and members of the Friends of Quivira will be available to answer questions

Barry Jones, Visitor Services Specialist, Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

Mike Oldham, Project Leader, USFWS - Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday Midday activities

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM – George Leroux's Bison Display, Children's Activities, Visitor Center

10:00 AM to 12:00n – Speakers – Quivira Visitor Center Meeting Room

1:00 -3:00 PM – Speakers – Quivira Visitor Center Meeting Room

Audubon of Kansas will provide hot cider and light refreshments at the Visitor Center.

VAN TOURS are \$12 each, children under 12 free, reservations required for the van seats.

This fee is to help pay for the van rental, and therefore is not refundable.

BOX LUNCHES available for \$8 on Saturday only, must be pre-ordered on registration form, pickup between 11 AM – 1:00 PM on Saturday at the Visitor Center

Deadline for registration is Oct. 28, 2019

Online: aok@audubonofkansas.org OR If you prefer to not use the online registration you may

a) download the pdf form (*or use the one on page 7*), print, and mail completed form to:

Audubon of Kansas, Inc., 210 Southwind Place, Manhattan, KS 66503 Make checks out to Audubon of Kansas

Or b) contact the AOK office - email aok@audubonofkansas.org or call 785-537-4385.

PLEASE do not call Quivira National Refuge Visitor Center.

Celebration of Cranes 2019 REGISTRATION

Please arrive 10 minutes prior to your chosen tour, return times are approximate
ALL ACTIVITIES /TOURS BEGIN AND END AT THE QUIVIRA NWR VISITOR CENTER

PICK YOUR TOUR: (indicate number of people)

_____ Friday, Nov. 1, EVENING Van Tour 3:30 PM – 7 PM
2:30 PM –Refuge staff overview of Quivira NWR prior to tour

_____ Saturday, Nov. 2, Morning DAWN Van Tour - 7:00 AM – 10:30 AM

_____ Saturday, Nov. 2, Morning SUNRISE Van Tour - 7:30 AM – 11 AM

_____ Saturday MIDDAY Refuge Van Tour - 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM
(birding may be limited at this time of day)

_____ Saturday, Nov. 2, EVENING Van Tour - 3:30 PM – 7:00 PM

****IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Daylight savings time ends Sunday at 2 AM! Clock falls back one hour; therefore, Sunday van tours are an hour earlier.*

_____ Sunday, Nov. 3, Morning DAWN Van Tour - 6:00 AM – 9:30 AM

_____ Sunday, Nov. 3, Morning SUNRISE Van Tour - 6:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Order Box Lunch (SATURDAY only) pickup between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM

_____ Box lunch(s)

Required information: (if registering for more than yourself, each adult must initial)

_____ I agree to this Liability waiver: _____ I agree to this Liability waiver:

_____ I agree to this Liability waiver: _____ I agree to this Liability waiver:

In consideration of my participation in the Celebration of Cranes event, I hereby release Audubon of Kansas and its officers, trustees and volunteers from any and all liability for injury, loss or damages, including liability for negligence.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Total Due:

Number of adults (include 13 and older children) _____ x \$12 = \$ _____

Number of children 12 and under _____ No Charge

Number of box lunches _____ x \$ 8 = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Make checks payable to Audubon of Kansas

Deadline for registration is Oct. 28, 2019.



Northern Flint Hills
Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1932
Manhattan, KS
66505-1932

Return Service Requested

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 662
Manhattan, KS 66502

The purpose of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society is to teach people to enjoy and respect birds and their habitats. NFHAS advocates preservation of prairie ecosystems and urban green spaces thus saving the lives of birds and enriching the lives of people.

Also available online at nfhas.org

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Also available online at nfhas.org

WE NEED YOU!

PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

Contact Patricia Yeager if interested, and watch our website and newsletter for time and day of meeting.

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Birdseed Chair

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AOK Representative: Cindy Jeffrey

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Contacts for Your Elected Representatives (anytime) Write, call or email: Governor: 2nd Floor, State Capital Bldg., Topeka , KS 66612. KS Senator or Representative: State Capital Bldg., Topeka, KS 66612. Ph# (during session only) Senate - 785-296-7300. House - 785-296-7500. U.S. Senator Roberts <Roberts@senate.gov> U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510. Jerry Moran U.S. Capital Switchboard 202-224-3121.