

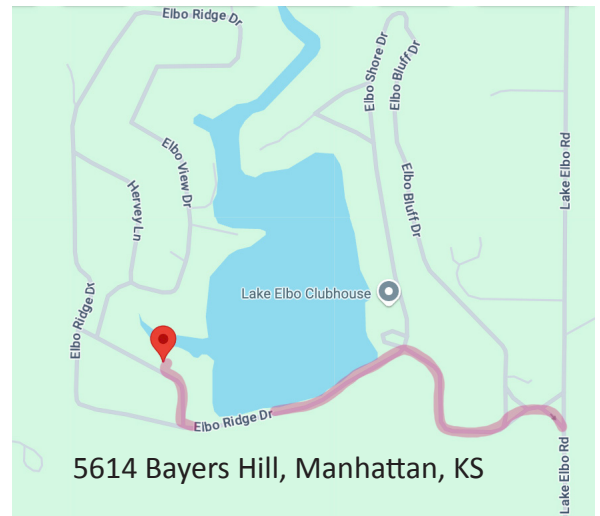
Open House and Birding!

Jan. 25 birders are invited to an open house at the home of Patricia Yeager at Lake Elbo.

People are welcome to bird 8:00 am (sunrise is 7:38) to 12n. Besides Lake Elbo, Pott. Lake No. 2 is just 5 miles away. Lunch will be served at 11:00 am. Eating is optional.

You are welcome to watch the bird feeders and enjoy a limited view of the lake from inside should it be too cold for you.

Come and go as you like between 8am and 12 noon.



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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 53, No. 5, January 2025

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Upcoming Events

- Jan. 7 - Board Meeting 5:30
Manhattan Public Library Study room
- Jan. 25 - OPEN HOUSE at Patricia's house at Lake Elbo-
Birding 8:30-11:00
Lunch 11:00
See above

76th Manhattan Christmas Bird Count 2024-2025

Mark Mayfield

A preliminary report

The current tally is 95 species and 20786 individuals. For species, this is above average. Only 2 species are very unusual, but we had good luck on species that are perennially difficult to find (could be missed in any year) yet we suspect they are usually here. Least Sandpiper (<https://ebird.org/checklist/S205396600>, Rocky Ford) is new for the count circle and California Gull (1st year, River Pond swimming beach) is a rarity, having been seen in 4 previous count years (1992, 2004, 2008, 2010). The Least Sandpiper was submitted to me as a separate report by Tom Schermerhorn (he did not expect to be able to participate...LOL!). Thanks everyone for all your help!! Also, if you notice anything is missing, please let me know.

Species	Subtotal				
Snow Goose	4740	Red-shouldered Hawk	11	Black-capped Chickadee	203
Ross's Goose	18	Red-tailed Hawk (Total)	56	Tufted Titmouse	88
Cackling Goose	13	--Red-tailed Hawk	52	Red-breasted Nuthatch	8
Canada Goose	2153	--Red-tailed (Krider's)	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	51
Gadwall	92	--Red-tailed (Harlan's)	3	Brown Creeper	5
American Wigeon	3	Rough-legged Hawk	2	Winter Wren	1
Mallard	170	--Buteo sp.	2	Carolina Wren	72
Blue-winged Teal	2	American Kestrel	16	Golden-crowned Kinglet	34
Northern Shoveler	4	Merlin	4	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Northern Pintail	2	Prairie Falcon	1	Eastern Bluebird	137
Green-winged Teal	59	Killdeer	8	Hermit Thrush	2
Redhead	4	Least Sandpiper	2	American Robin	1755
Ring-necked Duck	1	Ring-billed Gull	339	European Starling	1901
Bufflehead	3	California Gull	1	Cedar Waxwing	763
Common Goldeneye	170	Herring Gull	2	Yellow-rumped (Myrtle)	59
Hooded Merganser	21	Rock Pigeon, Feral	278	Spotted Towhee	27
Common Merganser	413	Eurasian Collared-Dove	55	American Tree Sparrow	574
Ruddy Duck	4	Mourning Dove	194	Field Sparrow	5
--Duck sp.	9	Great Horned Owl	2	Savannah Sparrow	6
Greater Prairie-Chicken	1	Barred Owl	4	Fox Sparrow	14
Wild Turkey	122	Belted Kingfisher	11	Song Sparrow	150
Northern Bobwhite	25	Red-headed Woodpecker	19	Lincoln's Sparrow	4
Pied-billed Grebe	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker	101	Swamp Sparrow	3
American White Pelican	28	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11	White-throated Sparrow	60
Double-crested Cormorant	66	Downy Woodpecker	77	Harris's Sparrow	355
Great Blue Heron	13	Hairy Woodpecker	5	White-crowned Sparrow	
Bald Eagle (Total)	38	--Northern Flicker (indet.)	162		
--Bald Eagle (adult)	28	--(Yellow-shafted) Flicker	17		
--Bald Eagle (immature)	10	--(Red-shafted) Flicker	2		
Northern Harrier	22	Pileated Woodpecker	13		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Blue Jay	29		
Cooper's Hawk	3	American Crow	1022		
--Accipiter sp.	2	Horned Lark	52		

Changing the Land

Dru Clarke



When children who are grown and have made a life in another, sharply different environment, decide to return 'home', where they, as impressionable youngsters, were heavily influenced by parents, mentors, friends, and the 'sense' of that place they call home, time hesitates and seems to run backwards. Our son and his wife, born an Easterner (as was he - we moved to Kansas in 1974), have begun building on land we are stewards of, and in a place modestly carved from a gentle rise in the Flint Hills. They hope to embrace a more earth-friendly life.

The home will be oriented east-southeast, downsized from the one they have lived in for three decades, but will have a view north-northeast of unbroken rolling prairie and woodland. Solar gain will also be modest but a 'must', and a potential wood burning stove (or perhaps a fireplace?) will augment warming in our often challenging winters to complement the concession to central heating (and air in summer).

Excavation of the hill has revealed several past land and seascapes: a two foot thick layer of chestnut brown prairie soil – a rare thickness in the thin-soil Flint Hills – rests atop what appears to be a waterborne deposit of mudstone, laced with limey thin wafers, perhaps left from the meltwater of the receding last glacier. In time, about 20,000 years ago. Beneath that are chunky blocks of limestone. Time, indeed, running backward, back to a shallow sea of the Interior where tiny floating animals sporting calcareous shells and skeletons died, leaving them in a chalky precipitate on the sea floor. People weren't here then – we are speaking of eons ago, the Permian, 280 million years ago - when the sea existed, but they may have witnessed the last glacial retreat and settled on what became our Great Plains grasslands, that biome beginning around 12,000 years ago. But new evidence reveals the movement of humans throughout the land even thousands of years before that, skirting the great ice sheet, venturing into what now are more arid landscapes, then eking out a life nourished by great beasts they hunted and plants they foraged for. Footprints hardened in mud dating back 23,000 years, here, on this continent.

Most of the great beasts are gone, save populations of bison scattered on preserves and ranches, and cows have displaced most grazers and provide the main agricultural pursuit in our Flint Hills. Our cows will have to give up about five acres they are accustomed to roaming. But until a suitable fence is established they will continue to supervise the construction site and inspect every anomaly, the spoils mounds, the sheer cuts, the newly graveled lane. But they stop along the terrace created in the '50's to arrest erosion and sample softening osage oranges, commonly called hedge apples, dropped from the female trees that once formed a hedgerow that served as a fence. Giant sloths once dispersed the seeds from the fruits in their droppings, leading to an expansion of the original range of the native tree. Desiccated hide-bound carcasses of giant sloths were found in a cave in South America, so they have not been gone long from the landscape.



Today's Northern Flint Hills are undergoing change in the communities they host. Further south, near Alma and beyond, you can stand on the verge of a dirt road and see in every direction nothing built. Here, subdivisions sprout as people want the flavor of country but with all the accoutrements of town life. Resources are being stretched and city and county commissions are faced with increasingly difficult challenges.

Here, we hope to leave as light a footprint as we can to preserve the integrity of the landscape. I hope it is forgiving of the desire of a native son to return home and to do the same.

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In memory of Elisabeth Vanderlip

Patricia Yeager

Long-time member Elisabeth Vanderlip passed away Dec. 6, 2024. Elisabeth and her husband, Richard, regularly attended meetings and last June presented one on birds of Australia.

She was a loyal member and will be missed.

<https://www.ymlfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Elisabeth-N-Vanderlip?obid=33999416>



TASKS - Should a sunny winter day entice you to take a tick-free walk through the Mitchel-Ross Preserve, would you help out and take a trash bag with you.

Plant Survey at Michel-Ross Preserve by Katie Smith (of the test plot where we cleared the Bush honeysuckle)

May, June unless otherwise indicated

- Tangled thread moss - Dense, tangled mat of very fine, thread-like green stems
- Narrow-leaved purple coneflower (endangered) - Tall stems topped with large, daisy-like flowers; purple petals radiating around a prominent, dark orange central cone
- Daisy fleabane (invasive, weed) - Small white daisy-like flowers with numerous thin petals surrounding a yellow central disk
- Bitternut hickory (tree sapling) - Large deciduous tree with compound leaves and a straight trunk; produces small, round nuts with a bitter taste
- Common pincushion (moss) - Small, cushion-like moss that forms low, dense clumps of tiny green leaves
- Licorice bedstraw (shrub) - Sprawling herb with narrow leaves in whorls and tiny white flowers; the plant has faint licorice scent
- Chinkapin oak (tree sapling) - Robust oak tree with a rounded crown, bearing toothed, oval leaves and small acorns - (October) exhibits leaves that turn yellow to golden-brown
- Ground-plum - Low-growing, with compound leaves and clusters of small, bright purple pea-like flowers followed by edible, plum-like fruits
- Salvia (sages) - Upright stems with lance-shaped leaves; spikes of vibrant, tubular flowers in various colors
- Penstemon (beard tongues) - Upright flowering stems, narrow leaves, and large, tubular flowers
- Stiff-leaved goldenrod (October) - Tall, erect stems with clusters of bright yellow flowers and dark green foliage
- Rough blazing star (October) - Distinctive, spiky purple flower heads and narrow, grass-like leaves
- Indiangrass (October) - Golden-brown flowering spikes
- Clay-gilled milkcap (mushroom) - Mushroom with a convex to flat cap, often orange or reddish in color, and distinctive clay-colored gills that exude a milky substance when broken
- Wild indigo (endangered) - Bushy plant with trifoliate leaves and clusters of small, pea-like blue or purple flowers
- Yellow sweetclover (invasive, weed) - Tall, upright stems with small, trifoliate leaves and dense spikes of tiny, bright yellow, sweet-scented flowers
- Amur Honeysuckle (October) - Yellow to orange leaves, berries toxic if eaten in large quantities
- Tall boneset - Clusters of small, white flowers, broad and rough leaves; toxic in large amounts

Patricia's Sugar and Spice Cookies
as requested by KSU students!

Mix together well:

3/4 cup shortening (I use butter flavored Crisco)

1 c. sugar

1 egg

1/4 c. molasses

Sift together:

2 c. flour

2 tsp. soda

1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. cinnamon

3/4 tsp cloves

3/4 tsp. ginger

Mix all together and form balls "the size of walnuts" as they always said the generation before mine

Bake at 375 degrees 10-15 minutes (depends on what you consider walnut size to be)

Do you need a last-minute birthday, anniversary or Christmas gift? Give a Northern Flint Hills
Audubon Society Subscription.

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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.

Published monthly (except August) by the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.
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Also available online at nfhas.org

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newsletter for \$20/yr.***

Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon
Society and mail to: **Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932,
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WE NEED YOU! PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

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