

AUDUBON – FITTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

BY PETER CANNON, CENTRAL REGION DIRECTOR

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD

OCT. 15, 2008, 7:30 P.M.

DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER ANNEX, 901 YUMA

DINNER PRIOR TO PROGRAM 6:00 P.M. APPLEBEE'S, 100 MANHATTAN TOWN CENTER

*NOTE TIME CHANGE

Ok, you belong to an Audubon chapter. Then there's Audubon of Kansas and the National Audubon Society. Confused? Peter Cannon, the Central Region Director on the National Audubon Society Board, will walk through a bit of Audubon's history and describe how chapters, state offices, and the national organization fit together. He will give an overview of chapters and discuss the sometimes troubled relations between chapters and National Audubon. Pete will explain the structure of the national board and how chapters came to nominate regional directors.

What's happening at the national level? What initiatives are currently underway and how might they affect chapters? For example, you probably know about the Christmas Bird Count and the Great Backyard Bird Count, but what happens to all those numbers after you report them? Peter will use current projects to illustrate the organization of the national staff. Members will have the opportunity to suggest what Audubon should be doing and how the national board and staff might help to make chapters stronger.

continued on pg 7

NORTHERN Flint Hills Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 1972, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1972



PRAIRIE FALCON

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Vol. 37, No. 2 ~ OCTOBER 2008

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ICE CREAM SOCIAL

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NATIONAL AUDUBON

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DRU CLARKE

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

OCT. 2 - BOARD MEETING 6 p.m.
(HOME OF PATRICIA YEAGER, LAKE ELBO)

OCT. 11 - BIRDSEED PICKUP
9-12N UFM, 1221 THURSTON

OCT. 11 - MONTHLY BIRDING WITH DORIS BURNETT
SEE PAGE 7, SOJOURNER TRUTH PARK 8 A.M.

OCT. 15 "FITTING THE PIECES TOGETHER"
7:30 p.m. DOUGLASS CENTER (SEE ABOVE)

OCT. 25/26 SPOOKTACULAR: SUNSET ZOO -
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED, SEE PAGE 7

BUTTERFLY GARDEN CLEAN UP



Anne Marchin

THANKS to all who helped with the cleanup prior to the Ice Cream Social. Not pictured here because she was taking the photos is Patricia Yeager. These wonderful workers are responsible for the Butterfly Garden being so beautiful and ready for all us to enjoy.

Kevin Fay



Susan Blackford, MJ & Tom Morgan



Tom Morgan

Susan Flackford & Anne Marchin



Susan Blackford



BUTTERFLY GARDEN & ICE CREAM SOCIAL

SUSAN BLACKFORD



Silver-Spotted Skipper

I will be thinning several plants in the butterfly garden. If you would like starts of any of the three following plants, send me an email at sjb0166@hotmail.com or call 537-6252:

- Live Forever (*Sedum purpureum*)
- Obedient Plant (*Physostegia virginiana*)
- Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)



Euchaetes egle, Milkweed tussock caterpillar (milkweed tiger moth)



Pipevine swallowtail caterpillar

The butterfly species list for Sunday Sept. 14th at the butterfly garden: Cloudless Giant Sulphur, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Pipevine Swallowtail, Monarch, Large Wood Nymph, Tiger Swallowtail, Imported Cabbage White, Silver-Spotted Skipper.



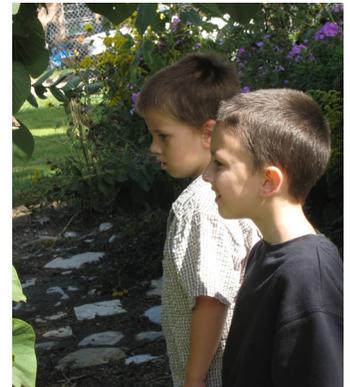
Cabbage White



Ice Cream Man
Kevin Fay



Monarch caterpillar



Neighborhood children joined us and were fascinated with the caterpillars



Lelah Dushkin, Karen McCulloh, Patricia Yeager



Lowell Johnson

Tom Morgan, Annie Baker enjoying ice cream at the Butterfly Garden



Annie Baker, MJ and Tom Morgan "Look!"





SKYLIGHT PLUS PETE COHEN

I began last month with the proposition that history in general is not the record of an unchangeable past, but of a past that often presents changing views. My example was the changed concepts of the “discovery” of what for awhile became known as the “New World,” ending by noting that Columbus was not the gullible person that my school texts made him to be for believing he had reached China.

Fact is, our Chambers Encyclopedia, published 50+ years before my schooldays, but not in my ken then, makes note of evidence of a Chinese presence in America dating from well before European exploration. It then adds that most of the critics of such evidence either disbelieved it, or regarded it as having “no possible (historical) value.”

Then in 2002, a former British submarine commander, Gavin Menzies, began bringing the results of his research to several meetings of historians and published a book titled “1421” (Transworld in Britain, William Morrow 2003 in the US) that apparently drew considerable notice at the time, though it has come to my attention only recently. His thesis of what was launched that year of 1421 – namely a huge Chinese expeditionary enterprise involving over 100 ships, some whose rudders alone stood 38 feet tall, with a complement of upwards of 25,000 men and women – has something for anyone interested in astronomy, anthropology, ecology, mineralogy, epidemiology, etc., etc.

As Menzies tells it, having the centuries of experience of people sailing and trading across the Indian Ocean to draw on, the Chinese had devised a method for determining longitude at sea centuries before John Harrison’s wonderful clock gave Europeans that capability. (They had collated many widely observed lunar eclipses and the positions of the stars.) Menzies puts forth evidence from physical remnants to current DNA samplings, that the Chinese planted colonies from New Zealand to Massachusetts, either intentionally or as the result of marooning ship-

wrecks, and in so doing expanded the “native” range of coconuts, yams, banana, turkeys, etc., etc.

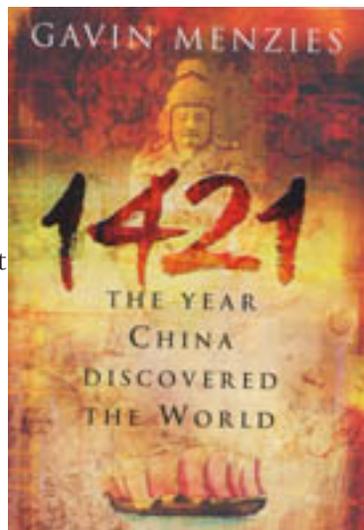
Furthermore, Menzies writes, they provided information for the maps which inspired Prince Henry to become “the Navigator,” and that other seafarers from Diaz to Cook used as guides. These maps guided Magellan to the Strait whose passage he, too, managed to survive. Including, he adds, one map that Columbus and his brother doctored to con Isabella and Ferdinand into believing westward offered a shorter route to China than Portugal’s rival eastern route. Plainly, history is his or her story with many versions by many authors. For anyone else who missed it earlier, there’s a lot in this one, plus a website (www.1421.tv) and a DVD. And a sequel, “1434” which according to the ad, proposes that it was Chinese visitors, along with Roman and Greek historical examples, who jump-started much of the Renaissance.

Now to the stars, currently, Jupiter and Venus will be providing a duet in the evenings skies, getting closer to each other as time goes by, but with the lady always leaving soonest, letting Jupiter to finish the act solo. During the latter half of the month Mercury will provide a morning show eastward before dawn, getting brighter and up to about a fist high as Halloween approaches.

Practically all month long the Orionid meteor shower will have something to show as remnants of Halley’s comet and our atmosphere collide. The remnants must be well spread out to add a few sparkles for so long, but they are apparently more clustered where they are

met on October 22nd. They seem to emanate from the hunter’s raised club or sword, and about ten an hour I find to be the expected maximum. The hunter’s weapon will be amid the Milky Way just below the feet of the Gemini Twins. Above it the bright star, Capella, will be at a corner of the (nearly Milk-filled) pentagon of Auriga the Charioter. Between Capella and the famous W or M or Rocking Chair of Cassiopeia, the bright mix of stars in the Milky Way will be Perseus, and from him, toward the western horizon the converging stars of Andromeda, will stretch to meet at the NE corner of the Great Square of Pegasus. Moon full 14th at 3p02, new the 28th at 6p14.

© 2008 Peter Zachary Cohen



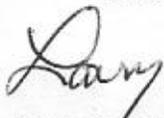
The Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society sponsored one of the buses used at this year's
Konza Prairie Visitors' Day

On behalf of Friends of Konza Prairie, I want to thank you and your organization for contributing money for bus rental for use at the Konza Prairie Biological Station Open House on Saturday, September 27, 2008. These busses will be used to transport the open house visitors around the Bison Loop on KPBS to view the bison, the scenery, and the landscape. There will be a Konza Environmental Education Program docent on each bus to help the visitors learn more about this research area.

In prior KPBS Open Houses, the visitors had to purchase tickets to ride the busses. This fee caused some visitor families to be unable to ride a bus if there were several members in the family. With your contribution, combined with contributions from other businesses, organizations, and individuals, all can now see the bison via the bus tour at no cost.

Hopefully, you and the members of your organization will attend the Open House. The newly restored stone barn will be open. There will be displays, booths, tours, and hikes. I am certain you will enjoy your visit.

Once again, thank you for your contribution.



Larry Loomis
President, Friends of Konza Prairie

NOTICE from National:

The deadline for submitting comments to the proposed rule changes to the "Endangered Species Act" has been extended by 30 days to October 15, 2008. As you know, the proposed changes would weaken the Endangered Species Act's effectiveness by making it easier for federal agencies to bypass consultations with federal biologists from the Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service. These evaluations guide the implementation process of federal actions to ensure that endangered species are not harmed. There is still time to submit comments urging that the new proposed rule changes to the Endangered Species Act be abandoned! Grassroots Outreach of the National Audubon Society has prepared talking points and a sample letter if you are interested - these can be found at www.audubon.org/campaign/esa/esacommentkit.doc or www.audubon.org/campaign/esa/esacommentkit.pdf.

These files also explain how to submit your comments; the federal government isn't accepting comments that are emailed or faxed to them. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the following:

Connie Mahan
Director, Grassroots Outreach
202-861-2242, ext 3036, cmahan@audubon.org

Sean Saville
National Outreach Coordinator
202-861-2242, ext 3037, ssaville@audubon.org

TOAD'S SUMMER HOME

DRU CLARKE

“But it was good to think he had this to come back to, this place which was all his own, these things which were so glad to see him again and could always be counted upon for the same simple welcome.”

Wind in the Willows, Kenneth Grahame (pp. 81-82)

Matum, our sleek red and white cat, stared at the jumble of moonseed vine I'd let grow, randomly rampant, on the side deck. The vine has become a natural camouflage for everything ground-bound needing shelter: even two canvas director's chairs, seats ripped from heavyweight visitors earlier this year, are hidden now beneath its foliage. The cat, I was sure, wasn't admiring the flamboyant vegetation, but something beneath it. I opened the screen door and peered down at the object of his gaze: there was the largest toad I have ever seen. The size of an overstuffed softball, it sat like a warty pillow facing away from me and the cat, totally unfazed by our presence. Fat, soft, and dry, it was at home under the vine.

This toad – the garden or Woodhouse's toad (*Bufo woodhousei*) – is commonly found around human dwellings. Its eggs are laid in strings in almost anything suitably wet (a pond, pool of a slow moving stream, even puddles.) It generally is active at night and survives on a diet of insects. The literature says that it likes to eat bees, so apiarists disdain it. Now, someone needs to explain this to me as I am having a hard time imagining a toad even catching a bee. Don't bees visit flowers that are usually on stems above the ground? I have not heard of a climbing toad, although their more beloved cousins, the frogs, are known for their climbing prowess.

There have been a lot of baby toads encountered this summer (the rain, warm weather, and abundance of food probably have contributed to this increase in population) so I have to be especially careful when I mow: I keep the blade high to give them the opportunity to hunker down then leap like mad before I make my next pass. We have a kitten who has tried to limit the population but all it has gotten for its efforts is a foamy mouth and distasteful

grimace: no toad as far as we know has succumbed to its fumbling playfulness. I do know that the hog-nosed snake (that exquisite reptile who rolls over and plays dead) exists exclusively on toads, so there will probably be a bumper crop of them this year as well.

While we have other toad species in the state of Kansas, we are lucky not to have the cane toad, an exotic amphibian introduced into Australia to control the cane beetle, the bane of the sugarcane industry. Now, this is a truly ugly toad, resembling Jabba the Hutt, whose image has become metaphor for something obscenely obese and corrupt. These toads get to weigh over ten pounds! Now the toad is the bane, so toxic that most domestic and wild animals who unfortunately ingest the poison it generates in its parotid glands (those kidney-shaped swellings behind the eye) die. (A few birds have learned to roll the toad over, peel back the belly skin, and eat only the internal organs!) Some animals, however, are immune and lab work progresses feverishly to control this invader. Fortunately, too, our domestic sugar cane industry avoided this fiasco.

It has taken me long enough to write this that I may have an answer to my puzzle of bee eating by toads. The moonseed is just outside the door next to my computer, so I can see the vine and its newly opened flowers. Lo and behold, there are bees (and other insects) all over the vine, sipping nectar from those clusters of tiny, pale, star-shaped flowers. Our toad with its long sticky tongue could have a feast. (But it would have to be active during the day.....hmm.)

I don't know why frogs are more likeable than toads, but I'll bet it is because of their smooth skin: people are usually turned off by blemishes and warts. But our domestic toad species are really neat and we're glad to share our deck with one of the most distinguished.



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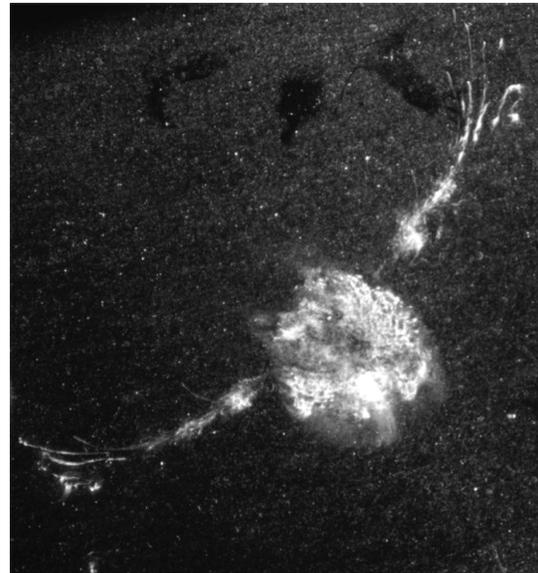
MONTHLY SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING



Doris Burnett will lead the second Sat. birding group in Oct. She has been the leader of a lake sector of the Christmas Bird Count for many years and graciously hosted lunch at her home for our first birdfeeder winter tour.

Those of you that have had the good fortune of experiencing the birdfeeder view from her living room, will know that this experience alone is worth getting up earlier than you might normally on a Saturday morning. We will meet at Sojourner Truth Park (10th and Pottawatomie) at 8:00 a.m. Oct. 11th.

Spooktacular at the Sunset Zoo - this will be our third year participating in this fun community event. The owls display (and sound effects) draw the children (and adults) in to take a close look. We need volunteers to help setup and “man” our booth for both days -Saturday Oct. 25 and Sunday, Oct. 26. Please call Patricia Yeager, 776-9593. It is a fun experience - and you get to see the children in Halloween outfits!



Dave Rintoul's photo of owl imprint on window

continued from page 1

Peter Cannon has been on the board of the Madison (WI) Audubon Society since 1988 (except for the years his wife, Marsha, served as president). He has served as publicity chair, operated the chapter's Nature Store, and been program chair for the last seven years. Cannon is also part of the team that manages the chapter's Internet site.

He is an active participant in the Wisconsin Audubon Council, serving as acting secretary for most of the last four years. In 2006 he was elected to the National Audubon Society board after being nominated by the chapters of the Great Lakes Region. Wisconsin and Minnesota joined the Central Region that year as a result of reapportionment of the national regions. In 2007, Peter was elected to represent the Central Region which includes Nebraska.

Cannon was a senior legislative analyst with the nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau for 26 years before retiring in 2005. He was one of the people who produced the Wisconsin equivalent of the Nebraska Blue Book.



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Mark Your Calendar:
Oct. 15, 2008
7:30 p.m., Douglass Community Center
Program presented by Audubon Central Region Director, Peter Cannon

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Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520. (cinraney@ksu.edu)
Also available on-line at www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html

Subscription Information: Introductory memberships - \$20/yr., then basic membership is \$35/yr. When you join the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of the National Audubon Society and receive the bimonthly Audubon magazine in addition to the Prairie Falcon newsletter. New membership applications may be sent to Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS 66505-1932. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership renewals are handled by the National Audubon Society and should not be sent to the NFHAS. Questions about membership? Call 1-800-274-4201 or email the National Audubon Society join@audubon.org.

If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in our local activities, you may subscribe to the Prairie Falcon newsletter for \$15/yr. Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, and mail to: Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS, 66502-1932.

RARE BIRD HOTLINE: For information on Kansas Birds, subscribe to the Kansas Bird Listserve. Send this message <subscribe KSBIRD-L> to <list_serve@ksu.edu> and join in the discussions.

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