

**OCT. 21, 7 P.M. - MANHATTAN PUBLIC LIBRARY
 "GROSBECK MEETING ROOM" 2ND FLOOR
 KONZA PRAIRIE: BREEDING PLACE FOR UPLAND SANDPIPER
 AND NIGHTHAWKS - JORGE MENDOZA**

The tallgrass prairie once covered 140 million acres of North America. The vast majority was developed and plowed and today less than 4% remains. A large amount of its remains lie mostly here in the Kansas Flint Hills. Konza Prairie Biological Station is critical for the preservation of the tallgrass prairie and for many of the species that use it as their home and breeding grounds. The Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) is a species that use Konza Prairie as breeding grounds every summer. Limited studies have been conducted in this species that are a conservation concern and little is known about their breeding behavior. Upland Sandpipers are shorebirds and mating systems among shorebirds vary greatly by species, ranging from strictly monogamous to promiscuous species. Upland Sandpipers are ground-nesting birds that construct well-covered nests at the tall grass prairie making it difficult to observe patterns of parental care. Better understanding of breeding behavior will aid in conservation of this species. The objective of my study was to examine the parental roles of Upland Sandpipers during brood rearing and survival of young. Another species with limited studies is the Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) and much of their natural history remains unknown. One question is whether nighthawks maintain territories or home ranges and by using radio telemetry we were able to get a better idea. Our results showed that radio telemetry can be successful with nighthawks and it could be useful to monitor their activity in order to investigate questions regarding their mating system and breeding. Finding more about their natural history may aid in the conservation of Common Nighthawks in urban areas. (see pg 5. for bio of Jorge Mendoza)

NORTHERN Flint Hills Audubon Society,
 P.O. Box 1932, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1932



prairie falcon

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 38, No. 2 ~ OCTOBER 2009

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Upcoming Events:

OCT 3 - BIRD SEED SALE PICKUP
 UFM 9-12N

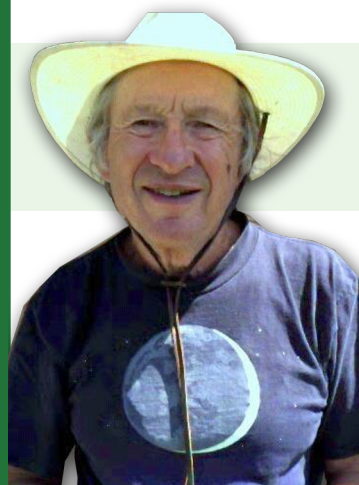
***OCT 5 - BOARD MEETING 6:30 p.m.**
 (TOM & MJ MORGAN HOME)

OCT 10 - SAT. MORNING BIRDING
 8 A.M. MEET AT SOJOURNER TRUTH PARK

***OCT 21 - 7:00 p.m. PROGRAM: Upland Sandpiper
 & Nighthawks, MANHATTAN LIBRARY-
 GROSBECK MEETING ROOM, 2nd floor SE CORNER
 DINNER 5:30 - BLUESTEM BISTRO**

OCT 25-26 Spooktacular, SUNSET ZOO

*** NOTE CHANGE**



SKYLIGHT PLUS

PETE COHEN

Time is a funny thing. Even though electricity travels at the speed of light, a pulse of it sent from Kansas at noon will not arrive in England till the clocks there say it is 18:00 (or 6 p.m. as we would say). And as this month ends there will be

another general “monkeying” with time, as cell phones blink and switch the time they show by an hour (back, Nov. 1st) without being asked. Some people adjust their watches by a simple twist of the wrist, while others perform more elaborate rituals, there being more ways to mechanically tick off the hours than one can point a gnomon at – a gnomon being the upright part of a sundial, which for accuracy requires that its flat portion be level with some certain optional cosmic plane, and even then the hours can pass at differing speeds, with the sun reaching nooning earlier or later, according to the season.

It seems uncertain as to when people first began to give numbers to various portions of the day, or why segments of twelve became the numerical guide-on. There are not exactly 12 full moons in a year. And though the sun does pass through 12 constellations (as perceived by the western world) during a year, those star groupings are of different sizes. One suggestion for the prominence of 12 is that a person’s normal hand provides a convenient counting machine by giving the thumb three digital touch points on each of the other four fingers.

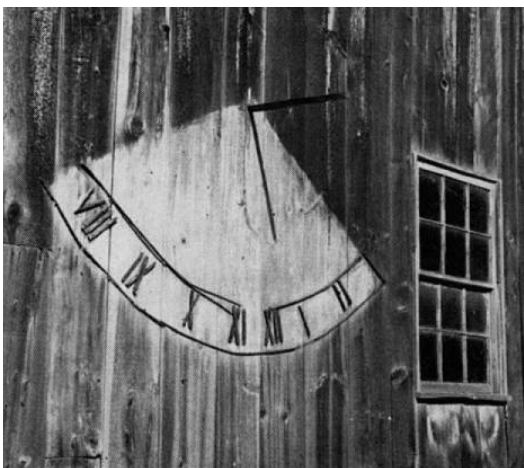
Mariners and explorers were the first to call on the ability of astronomers with gridded telescopes to pinpoint the position of certain stars at certain aspects of night, for then by noting their relationship to that star they could gauge how many degrees east or west they were from an observatory’s position. Columbus, among others, carried such schedules with him. This led, in the slower days of sail, for Borneo and the Philippines (though both are now on the same side of the International Dateline) to be a day apart in European eyes, because the former was discovered by Portuguese coming around Africa, the latter by Spanish having rounded Cape Horn, and eastbound travelers encounter progressively earlier sunrises, westbound progressively later.

By the 1800s, with the daily 24 hours scheme established, the swifter railroads and telegraphs began to make the differences in local times more confusing to more people. According to the current issue of the Univ. of Texas’ *StarDate*, various observatories began

marketing competing astronomically perceived times to help finance themselves. People in Buffalo, N.Y., could choose among the different times adopted by two different railroads and the local time, there being 35 minutes difference among the three. Salesmen would tap into one or another source and go out among the less connected countryside literally selling the time of day at retail.

The article by Nick D’Alto says it was Charles F. Dowd, president of Temple Grove Ladies Seminary in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., who suggested the present time zone arrangement, adopted by the Great Time Convention of 1883. On November 18th that year, a ball atop the Western Union building in New York City, synchronized with the U.S. Naval Observatory, fell initiating a nationwide standard time, a day on which many communities had two noons. Boston’s clocks went back 26 minutes; in Kansas City “jewelers raced to adopt Central Standard Time.” While an editorial writer in Indianapolis, various politicians, and others objected to having the railroads or the Government dictating how to set their clocks.

Looking ahead, and up, this October should be a time of gatherings. *StarDate* announces that on the 5th Venus, Mercury, and Saturn, from top right to lower left, line up in the dawn. They’re a grouping till the 12th with *The Old Farmer’s Almanac* predicting Mercury and Saturn will crowd together on the 8th, about a fist-width above the horizon, with the usually reclusive Mercury actually the brighter. On the 12th Mars rises with the Moon soon after midnight and by dawn gets in between the Moon and Castor and Pollux in Gemini. Then on the 13th Saturn cozies with Venus, slightly above Mercury. And before day on the 14th, Mars takes position above Regulus, in Leo, which will be above the Moon, which will be above Venus and Saturn, Mercury having bowed out. On the 21st, Antares, in Scorpio, will hang around briefly with the Moon after sunset. Meanwhile, Jupiter will be highlighting the evenings all month, setting ever closer to midnight. The Orionid meteor shower is due to peak the 21st -22nd. Moon full the 4th, 1a10, new the 18th, 12a33. ©2009 Peter Zachary Cohen



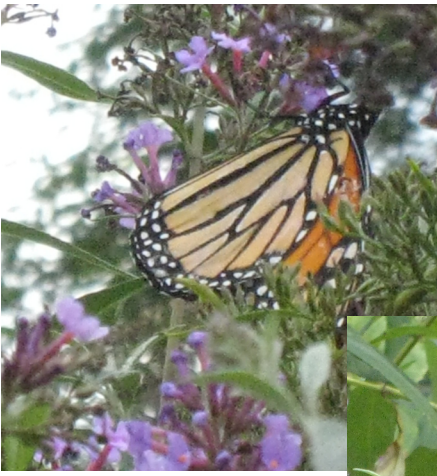
Actual 19th Century sundial as it looked in the 1950s, before a fire destroyed the building.
Union Mills Homestead Foundation

www.unionmills.org

It was placed on the southern wall of a tannery building at Union Mills, Md., in the early years of the Civil War by Andrew K. Shriver, for American travelers by stagecoach, wagon, carriage and automobile for a century..

BUTTERFLY GARDEN

SUSAN BLACKFORD



This year was wonderful for the butterfly garden! And the ice cream was good too, especially with MJ's pear/brandy sauce on top!



NEW “SPOOKY BIRD” CONTEST!

CONTEST TO HELP DEBUNK MYTHS ABOUT BIRD BEHAVIOR

Halloween is just a few weeks away, so the latest environmental challenge from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Celebrate Urban Birds citizen-science project is taking an eerie approach. The contest is called **“A Murder of Crows and Other Spooky Bird Tales”** and is co-sponsored by the Encyclopedia of Life website. “Believe it or not, a large group of crows is called a “murder,” says project leader Karen Purcell, “But there’s nothing really scary about it. Crows are very intelligent, family-oriented birds.

With this challenge, we really want to see what spooks people about birds. Then we can reveal what the behaviors are really all about. There’s usually a perfectly natural, non-scary explanation!” For the challenge, participants can take photos, do a painting, write a story or poem, even shoot a video showing birds doing something puzzling or strange to them. It may be a crow, starling, owl, pigeon, or any other type of bird.

Prizes include binoculars from Eagle Optics and Alpen, birdfeeders from YourBirdOasis.com, CDs, books, posters, and more. The first 50 entrants will receive a poster by Pedro Fernandez showing a variety of crow, jay, and other bird behaviors. Selected images and videos will be posted on the Celebrate Urban Birds website. The very best will be included in species accounts for the Encyclopedia of Life website.

How to enter: Email your entry to urbanbirds@cornell.edu.

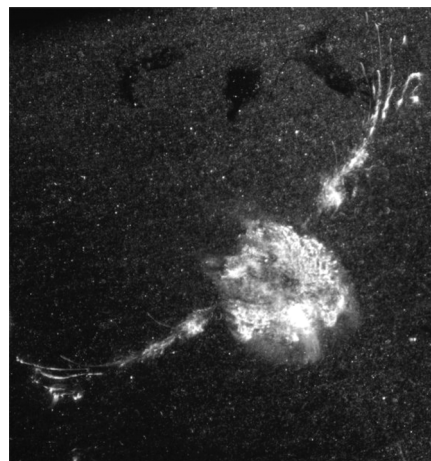
1. Write **“AMOC_YourFirstNameLastName_state”** in the subject line. (Use the two-letter abbreviation for the state in which the photo was taken.)
2. Include your name and mailing address in the body of the email.
3. Tell us **why** you submitted your entry to the Murder of Crows challenge. What’s the story behind it.
4. If you are submitting a visual image, attach it as a .jpg
5. One image per entry please
6. Read terms of agreement.
7. If you agree to the terms, send us your entry before October 31!

Deadline for entries is Halloween: October 31!

Visit the Celebrate Urban Birds website for more information and to read the terms of agreement regarding all entries.

Contact: Karen Purcell, Project Leader, (607) 254-2455, urbanbirds@cornell.edu

**I THINK DAVE RINTOUL’S
OWL IMPRINT MIGHT
QUALIFY FOR A SPOOKY
STORY!**



**OCT. 21ST PROGRAM: UPLAND SANDPIPERS & NIGHTHAWKS**

(see top of pg. 1)

Jorge Eduardo Mendoza was born and raised until the age of eleven years old in Mexico City. At the age of eleven his parents and three brothers moved to Garden City, Kansas. His two older brothers graduated from the Garden City Community College and he followed his steps by obtaining an Associates Degree in Science. He was honored by the community college to be the commencement speaker in his graduating year, 2007. Then he became the first in his family to attend a four-year institution, Kansas State University. He was accepted in the Bridges To The Future Program and the Developing Scholars Program where he began conducting research as an undergraduate student. He worked with the mentorship of Dr. Katsura Asano, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Yeast Genetics and Biochemistry during his first year at K-State. In the Summer of 2008 he was accepted in the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program and was mentored by Brett K. Sandercock, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology. He continued to work with Dr. Sandercock through the 2008-2009 academic year. Last summer, Jorge, completed an internship at Harvard University for a period of ten weeks with Scott V. Edwards, Ph.D. Organismic and Evolutionary Biology. This year he is working with Samantha Wisely, Ph. D. Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology. Jorge is a senior in biology and his expected graduation date is May of 2010

ALL NFHAS MEMBERS: CALL FOR PROPOSALS!

NFHAS Board members have targeted this year to fund a reader-initiated project. We are now soliciting ideas from our membership and will be posting the application guidelines in the next few months. So be thinking! What would you like to see your Audubon chapter underwrite? Habitat conservation, biology field work scholarships, support for an endangered bird species, research funds, a collaborative preservation project with another agency or group? We welcome creative, innovative and unusual approaches to wise spending of monies. We will ask that the project selected have a responsible party who will agree to write brief updates for the Prairie Falcon, perhaps twice a year, on the project as it unfolds. This person may also be asked to attend NFHAS board meetings from time to time. This would be the extent of any administrative duties.

Please watch future issues for proposal guidelines, which will be brief but require standard components like purpose, scope, budget, contact names. If you are wondering about the feasibility of an idea, please email Patricia Yeager, NFHAS President, at pyky@flinthills.com, just with ideas/inquiries. The more formal proposal will come later. We would love to fund a project unique to our area and arising from the passionate commitment of our membership.



E-NEWSLETTER: If you wish to opt out of the “paper” Prairie Falcon newsletter and get it on-line as a pdf - send your name and email address to Jacque Staats - staats@wildblue.net



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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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Contacts for Your Elected Representatives (anytime) Write, call or email:

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