

Heat, vacations, ticks, wildflowers,
butterflies, snakes,
- it's summer in Kansas!

Stay cool, stay hydrated.

And enjoy the birds.

Taking a break - no newsletter in
AUGUST



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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 41, No. 11~ July 2013

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Upcoming Events

Jul 13 - Saturday Birding 8 a.m.
Meet Sojourner Truth Park
(Cancelled if raining)

Jul 8 - Butterfly Garden Cleanup 6:30 p.m.

Aug 5 - Board Meeting 6 p.m.
Tom & MJ Morgan home

Aug 10 - Saturday Birding 8 a.m.
Meet Sojourner Truth Park
(Cancelled if raining)



Skylight plus Pete Cohen

As a teenager in the 1940s I walked 1.5 miles to school and at least once each trip a passing street bus would give me a nose-full of exhaust, and I wondered then how much of that our air supply would take. It's amazing how those quiet private thoughts of mine have spread. (And I wonder how many more buses are on that route today.)

In recent times ideas that particulates sent into the air would lead to steadily cooling conditions by blocking sunlight (as had the debris of Tambora's eruption in 1815) have been competing with ideas that gaseous emissions would lead to increasingly warmer-to-hotter results by trapping the Sun's heat that gets through – desert's delight. In his poem, *Fire and Ice*, Robert Frost contemplated how the world as we know it would end. From what he'd "tasted of desire" he favored fire, yet he "knew enough of hate" to believe that ice would "suffice."

I've read that currently the pace of global warming has been slowing, perhaps because the oceans are being influenced to absorb more: that there is evidence that subsurface they are warmer deeper now than ever before. Whether they are taking permanent possession or intend to give the heat back in some way at some time is for future chapters.

Once there were concerns that we were running out of fossil fuels, and now there's seems enough that there is definitely strife over the ecological costs of obtaining it. While the devil in all the details seems to remain: emissions. To prevent destabilizing heat or cold, and ghastly pollutions: stop emissions!

The book, *The Whole Story of Climate*, that I've referred to, recounts that in 1962 the eastern Pennsylvania town of Centralia, in burning some trash, set fire to a coal seam. Before that, in my childhood, I'd heard of the ongoing coal seam fire at Laurel Run in Pennsylvania, and I've belatedly discovered such happenings are active the world around, without an active publicity department--Wikipedia names one in Australia going for the past 6000 years. And the book's author urges that giving attention to

those sources could achieve major emission suppression, in sum and per cost.

Alternative fuel sources have their own ecological and dollar costs and disabilities. However, customers of REAs in this area could be encouraged by an article in their April news magazine describing at least some progress in the challenge of storing wind and solar energy, by pumping water or compressing air into sufficiently sizeable reservoirs, as well as toward the aim for batteries that will be able to function through 80% discharge for 10,000 cycles, all for use during the many times when the power from wind and Sun is needed but not being produced. (Apparently, though, such success would not materially reduce the need for some 36,000 miles of additional transmission lines referred to elsewhere in the magazine.)

Another wrinkle, literally, with some upside is that with the retreat of the last Ice Age, the shorelines in Scandinavia, with the land free of the frozen weight, have been flexing up through these past 10,000 years a little more than the adjacent waters have risen from the melt. Clearly the current affairs of climate will be felt differently here and there, and will remain a most interesting work in progress (at least till *The Prairie Falcon* resumes in September).

Through July-August those notable companions, Scorpius in the lead with Sagittarius close behind will reprise their traverses of the southern skyline at the tip of the Milky Way. Also Deneb, the tail star of Cygnus (northward in the Milky Way) will join with Vega, brightly bluish in compact Lyra to the west, and with Altair, bright in the long triangle of Aquila to the south, to compose the Summer Triangle. Venus will be vibrantly present, making a trio with the Moon and Leo's Regulus July 11th; the Moon joins with Saturn and Virgo's Spica the 16th, after nearly obscuring Spica on the 15th. August 3rd-5th the Jupiter (on top), Mars, and Mercury form a nearly vertical line with the top two in the rectangle of Gemini; on the 4th-5th a waning crescent Moon slides past them.

A returning Moon duets with Venus the 9th-10th, with Saturn on the 12th, with Jupiter the 31st. It sets in late evening as the Perseid meteor shower peaks the 11th-12th. It's new the 6th at 4p51, and full the 20th at 8p45.

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Looking for Light & Shade

Dru Clarke



It's hot today, with an unusual wind from the south, southeast. I break up the mowing in parcels that takes me from light to shade. The cows call from the creek where I expect they are standing quietly in ankle deep water; the big dog has nudged open the west door to sprawl on the tile floor. No birds call, except an occasional oriole and a distant cuckoo.

Lazily turning, as if on a spit of wind, a vulture surveys the land. Above it is a wash of blue and light, and I know when it comes to earth, it will hunker down on limestone piled high in a nearby quarry with others of its kind, wings spread, planes of black, oiled feathers tilted toward the sun. Through avian alchemy, vitamin D, essential for keen eyesight and strong bones, is created, just as it is on our own skins when exposed to sunlight. The bird spends more time unshaded than I, and I wonder about how it maintains homeostasis with its black cloak. While flying high above the earth, where the air cooler, it would be less of a challenge than when the bird is perched on a hot rock.

Birds pant, and some do a "gular flutter" by working their throat muscles rapidly, the thin skin of the neck flushed with blood contained in tiny capillaries that dissipate heat rapidly. Think of the already ungainly looking cormorants or boobies, fluttering away. ☺ Albatrosses sit with their feet outstretched so I've read. THIS I'd love to see. ☺ ☺ Others ruffle their feathers and some, like our hens, lie belly- flat in shallow depressions in the soil. Some bathe in water from puddles, streams or birdbaths, shimmying their heads and bodies to distribute the droplets. But mostly, in the warmest and brightest time of the day, they seek shade, under a canopy of layers in a woodland or deep down in the grassland. They become quiescent and are active only when disturbed. Here, too, mosquitoes and ticks congregate, waiting, alert for any passing warm-blooded beast. The exclusively nectar-feeding male mosquito is oblivious to the interloper, but the blood-feeding females sense a smorgasbord: I shift the mower to higher rpm's as I pass beneath the trees. Her eggs will have to be nourished by some other creature's corpuscles.

It isn't until later that I discover the ticks have been less obvious but more successful in their bloodlust. Black-legged, American Dog and Lone Star (the latter two sound like beer breweries) all have at various times nestled in my nether parts, and I've enlisted the keen eyes and nimble fingers of my husband to find and remove those I can't reach. They trade the shade of shrubs for that of my shorts and shirt, seeking the meal of a lifetime. I fear the diseases they carry – erlichiosis (our neighbor ended up in the hospital with this one), Lyme (my New Jersey-dwelling mother had this), Rocky Mt. spotted, babesiosis, tularemia – and shower more frequently than other seasons of the year.

John Keats, the Romantic poet, afflicted with tuberculosis and seeking some respite from its dissipating symptoms by traveling to sunny Italy from the penetrating damp of England, wrote to his friend Charles Brown of writing poetry as (seeking) "the knowledge of contrast, feeling for light and shade" which he personified, his body wracked with fever and chills. The phrase "Light and Shade" is the title of a popular modern album/ song by Norway's Fra Lippo Lippi (you can download it as your ring tone) and an album by England's Mike Oldfield. Jimmy Page, renowned guitarist from Led Zeppelin, said the band aimed for "a kind of construction in light and shade," and his conversational biography is titled "Light and Shade." (A bootlegged album of the band's 1971 Tokyo concert is eponymously named.)

So, we are moved and informed by contrasts, and we build meaning from them; we need them to maintain our balance or we go off all a kilter, recklessly staying in the sun too long, burning up, or languishing in the shade, growing pale and bone-weak.

*Dru Clarke
Mid-June 2013*

STILL NEEDED BIRD SEED SALE COORDINATOR

If we are to sell bird seed next Fall, we need a volunteer to serve as our bird seed sales coordinator. Responsibilities include:

- 1) Contacting our supplier for prices and updating the Order Form.
- 2) Taking orders from our membership and submitting collated order to our supplier three times a year.
- 3) Coordinating and supervising order delivery and pick-up three Saturday mornings during the fall and winter.

Please contact Patricia Yeager, pyky@flintheills.com 776-9593 for more information.



Orioles



photo by Tom Morgan



“You know you’re not in Kansas any more....”

If the Orioles nest is over three feet long and woven of Spanish moss.

Tropical orioles always place it where it will receive the least wind, and they usually build it out over water to minimize predation.



**Northern Flint Hills
Audubon Society**



photos courtesy of Dave Rintoul

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Getting Started



the Prairie Falcon

The Prairie Falcon is the monthly newsletter for the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society. It contains upcoming events, articles and other

Bird Blog

[Submit to the Bird Blog](#)

A Multitude of Eagles

This was taken at Tuttle Creek State Park, mid-afternoon on Christmas Day. There are at least 8, likely 9, and possibly 10 (the tenth would be the one in the air near the left edge of the photo) eagles here, at least 6 of them adults. There likely were more around. I was able to watch eagles in flight, and observed a few of these in this picture as they landed. It was an incredible sight.



Submitted by Donna Roper on December 26, 2012

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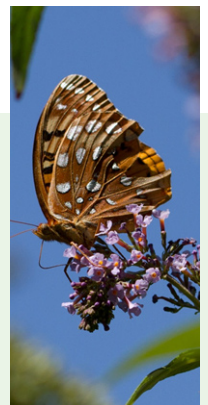
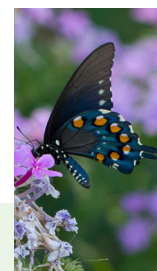
BUTTERFLY GARDEN - CLEANUP

SOJOURNER TRUTH PARK

Just over the railroad tracks south of Howies Recycling on 10th St.

**Second Monday
of each Month
6 p.m.**

**July 8th
August 12th
September 9th**



There is still time to give us your ideas for the upcoming year's programs/events/trips.

We got several good suggestions from members and know there must be more out there!

Please give Patricia or any board member a call or email. What do you want learn more about? What trips would you like our chapter to coordinate/sponsor?



Birds at Your Feeder/Bath

Because feeders offer you an up-close view of birds, and because birds seek out easy meals when their health is compromised, you might occasionally see a sick bird at your feeder. Only veterinarians or federally licensed wildlife rehabilitators can legally treat wild birds. If you see a bird that appears to be compromised in some way, perhaps due to sickness or injury, do not try to care for the bird yourself. It is illegal for you to possess most wild birds unless you are under the direction of someone licensed for their care.

If a sick bird comes to your feeder, minimize the risk of infecting other birds by cleaning your feeder area thoroughly. If you see several sick birds, take down all your feeders for at least a week to give the birds a chance to disperse. Remember that prevention is the key to avoiding the spread of disease. Regularly clean your feeders even when there are no signs of disease.



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Membership Information: Introductory memberships - \$20/yr., then basic, renewal membership is \$35/yr. When you join the National Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society. You will receive the bimonthly Audubon magazine in addition to the Prairie Falcon newsletter. New membership applications should be sent to National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership renewals are also handled by the National Audubon Society. Questions about membership? Call 1-800-274-4201 or email the National Audubon Society join@audubon.org. Website is www.audubon.org.

Subscription Information: If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in NFHAS 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, 66505-1932

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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