



Carnahan Creek area - our bluebird trail is in the background hills.

Spotted FOS Yellow-bellied sapsucker!

What have you been seeing?

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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 53, No. 3, November 2024

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Upcoming Events

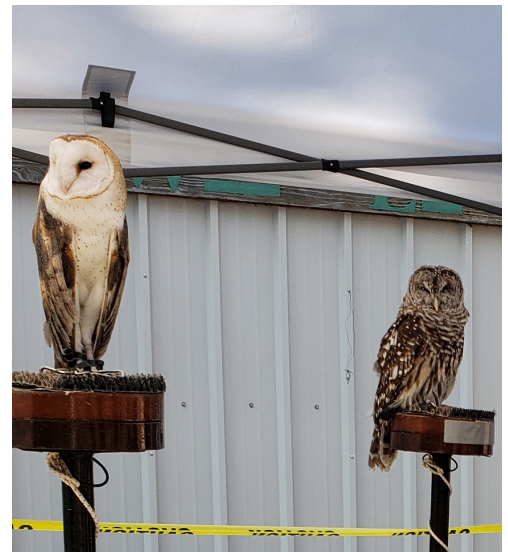
- Nov. 5 - Board Meeting 5:30 pm,
Manhattan Public Library
Study room
- Nov. 9 - Bird seed **PICKUP**
UFM PARKING LOT
- Dec. 3** - Board Meeting 5:30 pm,
Manhattan Public Library
Study room
- SAVE THE DATES:
Dec. 14 - Manhattan CBC
Dec. 15 - Olsburg CBC

Operation Wildlife (OWL) Open House, Sunday, Oct. 6th:

Several NFHAS members attended OWL's annual open house fundraiser. This wildlife rehabilitation facility, located in Linwood, serves 9 counties in Northeast Kansas. Attendees were treated to live music, food, unique raffle items and tours of the facility and grounds where many temporary residents or permanent education animals (primarily raptors) were on display.



One interesting tidbit picked up during the tour: OWL's food bill for one recent month was \$10,000 (for frozen mice, etc.); OWL also raises its own mice and rats for animals who require live prey.



The Respectable Bird

Dru Clarke



Most summer migrants have flown south and our woodlands have gone quiet. The owls have taken over to provide most night sounds, but they've been apparent throughout the warm months and will persist through fall and winter, reminding us that birds, indeed, besides those that come to our feeders, are still here, inhabiting our woods. I saw a lone turkey vulture today, spiraling over a pasture, but her sisters have disappeared. What have emerged and become more visible in recent days are the wild turkeys.

Two groups of different ages (apparent through size differences) strolled down our "minimally maintained" dirt road, then melted into the woods on the east side. It is a thick, mostly deciduous woods of oak, hickory, hackberry, elm, flanking an almost dry stream, relieved by pools that have held water through this droughty time. Where they have been this summer remains a question, although we have occasionally spied the j-shaped excreta of the toms and mushier deposits of the hens in the detritus under the trees. (Because hens have cloacas that accommodate eggs, they are stretchier and more elastic than the males, hence their poop is clumpier.) Several broods must have hatched this summer and survival appears to have been optimum. (These flocks are called rafters in turkey parlance, from their habit of flying up to tree limbs to perch away from would-be predators.) It is a good mast year and hickory nuts and acorns from the trees edging the road have created a marbled strew that turkey (and deer) are feasting on.

The Aztecs in Mexico domesticated the native turkey and Spanish conquistadores took some back to Spain. The bird spread throughout Europe and was introduced to England in 1541. Whether or not they were served at the first Thanksgiving we aren't sure (sources disagree, but mention "wild fowl" being part of the fare), but Lincoln in 1863 made Thanksgiving a national holiday. Through overhunting their population dropped to around 30,000 in the early

1900's, but it has resurged to an estimated seven million today. There are six (some say seven) subspecies.

The turkey is a regal bird but has some decidedly odd anatomical features. Both the male and female have a snood, a wormlike, fleshy red appendage that dangles from the forehead. (Marilena Ferguson, Clyde's wife, told me that women used to wear a snood to corral their hair: It was a net that wrapped the hair within at the base of the neck.) The wattle, also red and brisket-like, adorns the neck and throat, and the beard, a cluster of modified feathers, sprouts from the chest of the male. His featherless head, also red, turns white tinged with blue when he gets excited. (I don't know if the hens have the same response.) Turkeys run up to 25 mph and can fly over short distances at 55 mph. The turkey we eat at Thanksgiving has both white and dark meat. Wild turkeys have dark meat. The color of the meat has to do with the abundance or lack thereof of blood vessels: muscles in the legs and thighs do most of the work, so need an abundance of oxygen supplied by blood. Domesticated birds don't usually move around much and can't fly (they are too heavy for their wings to support them) so the breast meat is white, lacking many blood vessels. Wild birds have dark meat throughout legs, thighs, and breasts because they run and fly.

Besides gobbling, turkeys purr, yelp, and make 'kee-kee' sounds. Now I know what those eerie sounds I hear in the night besides the owls' calls are! Are turkey facts fun???

Our national bird, of course, is the beautiful bald eagle. But Ben Franklin said that the turkey was a most respectable bird. Remember that this Thanksgiving when you slather gravy on that slice of white turkey breast. A respectable, and delicious, bird!

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Alsop Cleanup

Patricia Yeager



On Sept. 17 th a productive volunteer crew made significant progress in putting the Alsop garden to sleep for the winter. As I am writing this on October 15th the first frost is upon us this evening. Merry and I (Patricia) covered a few flower beds so that blooms can bring us joy for a few more weeks and the bees on the asters can collect their last pollen for the season.

Thank you to Student Bird Club volunteers Jared Johnson, Jacob Riggs and Colton Cape. Our loyal and hearty members that helped were Gloria Raney, Doug Denning, Steve Kramer, Merry Bower and Patricia Yeager. We filled a trailer with excess vegetation that was hauled off by husband Kent Yeager. Jim Koelliker continues to keep the bird feeders filled. It takes all of us for this green space to exist. Thank you all.



"KSU Bird Club"

Inspiring the next generation of birdwatchers, conservationists, and activists"



One of the leading concerns of Audubon groups across the nation is ensuring a continual lineage of passionate birdwatchers, conservationists, and activists that will uphold the beliefs of their organizations and understand the value of protecting native species and ecosystems. In today's rapidly changing political and environmental climate coordinated efforts between groups that share common interests is a must.

On October 3rd, 2023 a small group of students at Kansas State University recognized the importance of providing a space where students with a passion for recreational bird watching and ornithology could gather to discuss their ideas,

hear from researchers, and collaborate with Audubon societies on the local, state, and national levels. The students called this group KSU Bird Club and formed the first Audubon Student Campus Chapter in the state of Kansas. Since its founding KSU Bird Club has cultivated a vibrant and diverse community where students, faculty, and guests from all disciplines can gather and share their passion for birds. In just one year the club has grown to 53 registered members, 85 associated members, and a highly dedicated 8-person officer team. Two of which also serve as current board members of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society (NFHAS); Jacob Riggs, and Jared Johnson.

The KSU Bird Club meets in person every week where they get to hear presentations about ongoing research in the ornithology space and species spotlights that help new bird watchers with field identification. The club also goes on regular bird walks where members go bird watching as a group around the Manhattan area to build community and hone their birding skills. The club is also involved on campus with other student organizations such as Students for Environmental Action (SEA), Bird Strike Window Collision Project, and campus Greek life.

Members of KSU Bird Club have also been heavily involved in local birding events over the past year. The club was responsible for a section during the 2023 Manhattan Christmas Bird Count where club members identified 51 species and contributed some unique species to the total count. The club also took a trip to Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira Wildlife Refuge last spring to help NFHAS in the annual bird-a-thon fundraiser. Club members who traveled to these keystone migration hubs identified 116 species while members who stayed in the Riley County area identified 102 species. Altogether, these efforts contributed to the record-breaking total of 175 species identified during the fundraising event. During the 2023 Spring KOS club members helped guide groups of bird watchers from around the state to local hotspots.

KSU Bird Club is proud to be associated with NFHAS and looks forward to working with the organization to help build community, bend the bird curve, and protect our beloved birds and local ecosystems.

Jacob Riggs (President)



The digital helper:

Merlin Bird ID

If you haven't tried an app for birds yet, check out "Merlin."

Merlin features the best of community contributed photos, songs, and calls, tips from experts around the world to help you ID the birds you see, and range maps from Birds of the World—all powered by billions of bird observations submitted to eBird.



<https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

Identify Bird Songs and Calls

Identify Birds in a Photo

Save Birds to Your Life List

Explore Lists of Birds Near You

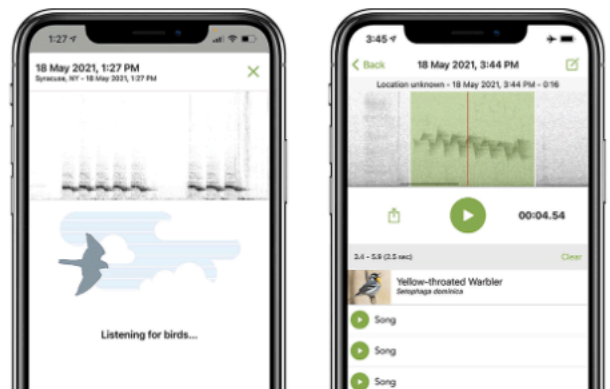
See How Merlin Can Help You ID Birds

Identify Bird Songs and Calls

Sound ID listens to the birds around you and shows real-time suggestions for who's singing. Compare your recording to the songs and calls in Merlin to confirm what you heard. Sound ID works completely offline, so you can identify birds you hear no matter where you are.

Available for birds in the US, Canada, Europe, with some common birds of Central and South America, and India.

More species and regions coming soon.



Pete Cohen Update:

Pete reports "Have found out that even on 107 degree days the morning air here (AZ) is moderate, so I have been getting out and improving."

TASK LIST

Volunteers needed

Volunteers needed

NORTHEAST PARK INFORMATIONAL SIGNS RESTORATION

- Clean up the post, sand lightly and stain.
- Finish the "white board" side. Make (or shop for and purchase) and attach container for wet erase pens.

CECIL BEST BIRDING TRAIL- RE-ESTABLISH AND REPAIR

- Look over bridge and make carpentry repairs.
- Sand / finish if need be
- Weed eat / cut back vegetation along trail edge
- Cut down and poison bush honeysuckle
- Wheelbarrow in gravel to fill eroded spots in trail (or use 4-wheeler if someone has one)
- Remove old birdhouses and replace or relocate new ones. Urgent task. So that any virus may be removed.
- Look over wooden benches and repair if need be
- Look over observation deck and sign and repair as needed

MICHEL-ROSS PRESERVE

- Walk through preserve and haul out trash.
- Inspect signage and paint posts.
- Volunteers will be needed to put up a goat fence for 2 hours or so next year. This will need to happen when the bush honeysuckle is just getting its first leaves. It will be scheduled in late winter before other plants start sprouting and before the ticks and chiggers are present. The focus here is to make a long term plan to remove as much bush honeysuckle as possible over the next 5 years or so. Then it will need to be managed every year thereafter. This will eventually keep natural walking paths open and help maintain plant diversity in the 26 acre forested preserve.

As you can see, there is much to do to maintain our green spaces. We will feature a task every month in the Prairie Falcon. Generally, we will work for two hours and do whatever we can. The more hands the more we can get done. Contact Patricia Yeager for more information.

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

Gift Subscription

Recipient Name _____

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Welcome to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society

This gift is from _____

NFHAS Subscription Information: \$20 subscription

Mail this form with your check (payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society) to:

Attn: Gift Subscription

**Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932,
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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.

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Also available online at nfhas.org

National Audubon Society:

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National Audubon Society support@audubon.org

When you join National Audubon Society you automatically
become a member of NFHAS.

NFHAS Subscription Information: If you do not wish to join
the National Audubon Society, but still want to be involved in
NFHAS local activities, ***you may subscribe to the Prairie Falcon
newsletter for \$20/yr.***

Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon
Society and mail to: **Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932,
Manhattan, KS 66505-1932**

WE NEED YOU! PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

NFHAS Board

President: [Patricia Yeager](mailto:pyeagerbirder@gmail.com) - pyeagerbirder@gmail.com 317-1558

Vice Pres.:

Secretary:

Treasurer: Jared Johnson

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Alsop Property: Patricia Yeager and Merry Bower

Education:

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Newsletter: [Cindy Jeffrey](mailto:cinraney@ksu.edu) - cinraney@ksu.edu 565-3326

Fieldtrips: Patricia Yeager, and Board

AOK Representative: [Cindy Jeffrey](mailto:cinraney@ksu.edu) - cinraney@ksu.edu 565-3326

At-large: Susan Blackford, Kevin Fay

Contacts for Your Elected Representatives (anytime). Write, call or email: Governor Laura Kelly: 2nd Floor, State Capitol Bldg., Topeka, KS 66612. KS Senator or Representative: State Capitol Bldg., Topeka, KS 66612. Ph# (during session only) Senate - 785-296-7300. House - 785-296-7500. U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, U.S. Senator Roger Marshall U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510. Representative Tracey Mann, Jacob LaTurner, Sharice Davids and Ron Estes: U.S. Capital Switchboard 202-224-3121.