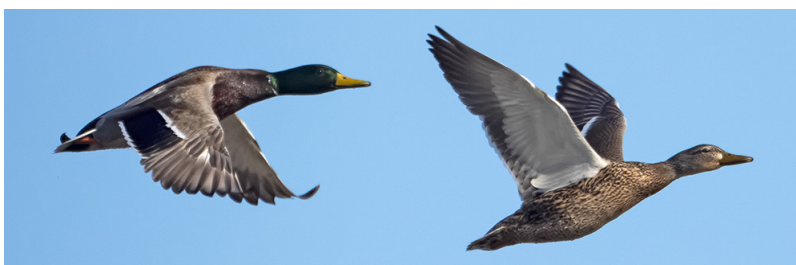


Wednesday, July 24, 7pm

Groesbeck Rm, Manhattan Public Library

Three Billion Birds Lost, and what to do about it, presented by Jackie Augustine

A recent study revealed that we have lost one in four individual birds since 1970, amounting to nearly 3 billion birds. However, not all species declined and some habitats experienced more declines than others. Dr. Jackie Augustine, Audubon of Kansas Executive Director, will explain how this was estimated, describe trends in the data with respect to species and habitats, and share ways you can prevent further losses in your own neighborhood.



photos by Dave Rintoul

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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 52, No. 11, July 2024

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Upcoming Events

Jul 13 - Saturday morning birding: Departs 8:00 am from
Sojourner Truth Park

**Jul 24 - PROGRAM: 3 billion birds lost, by Jackie Augustine
7pm Groesbeck Rm. Manhattan Public Library**

Aug 6 - Board Meeting 5:30 pm,
Manhattan Public Library
Study room

NO NEWSLETTER OR PROGRAM IN AUGUST



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

Here continues a discourse on coyotes, with the book "Coyote America" by historian Dan Flores as its template, for it seems a story worth putting together. Thus

far in the story, the native North American creature with a name derived from the Aztec "coyotl", has been companionably regarded by North America's first humans for thousands of years as a natural part of the world, and interesting enough to be celebrated in rituals, festivities, and stories. We now go further:

To the first Europeans arriving, mainly explorers, trappers, and missionaries, the creature seems to have been mainly a puzzle. Was it a small wolf, large fox, misplaced jackal, or what? As mentioned it's now, with some dissent, considered a separate species, *Canis latrans* (the barking dog).

Then with the settler invasions of America's plains and deserts came a swelling tide of negative opinion with crests of hate and careless cruelty. Coyotes were (gasp) predators, and predators all became the slathering incarnations of the evil of wilderness, all needing to be destroyed for the well-being of everything else, including the safety of the deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope that human hunters wanted to kill. (That those prey species had existed in healthy numbers along with coyotes, and wolves, for millennia didn't register.)

Mark Twain joined in by saying that a coyote was such a wretched creature that its fleas would desert if for a velocipede (a pedal-less bicycle; one sat on the seat and propelled with one's feet).

But those were just words, the sticks and stones came in the form of poisons that began being spread far and wide from around 1880. Strychnine was the first choice, but it caused such quick convulsions that observant coyotes learned to avoid tainted baits. And as their numbers were reduced the surviving members of a pack, in typical coyote response, produced ever larger litters.

So the war against predators intensified, nearly doing in the gray wolf as market-hunting and pure blood lust had nearly done in the buffalo. It was taking aroused human individuals time, money, and effort, to save the gray wolf and buffalo from human caused extinction, while in whack-a-mole fashion, coyotes, aided only by teeth that let them feed on certain plants and insects, beside mammalian prey, and the ability to fend singly as well as in packs, kept on sounding in the nights.

More lethal and subtle poisons were derived, and in keeping with the Progressive Era waves of the Nineteen Teens, a federal agency named the Bureau of Biological

Survey was formed to deal with nature. Its head announced that the balance-of-nature was now superseded by civilization, whose job it was to manage nature; to improve it by ridding it of its "archpredator". In the 1920s, my source book reports, the superintendent of Glacier National Park sought to improve nature by obtaining a pair of coyotes both suffering from sarcoptic mange, and turning them loose into the park with best wishes for happy breeding.

Meanwhile with the gray wolf gone, other coyotes were exploring the country east of the Mississippi and discovering cities with interesting rodent populations. Los Angeles, too, was drawing more attention. In Washington, D.C. the Animal Damage Control Act of 1931 was extending one million dollars annually for the next 10 years dedicated to the eradication of coyotes. To what would all this lead? It takes yet another session.

Most of the notable celestial visitations this July will occur in the wee hours at the beginning and end of the month. Mars and Jupiter rise in the dawnlight with the Moon closest to Mars the 1st, between the two the 2nd, and nearer Jupiter the 3rd. Before sunrise on the 30th the Moon, Mars, Jupiter and Taurus' bright eye, Aldebaran will form a rough square with the Moon at the upper left corner, Mars to its right, Aldebaran below Mars and to the right of Jupiter, that'll be below the Moon. On the 31st the Moon will have shifted to be beside El Nath. The star at the tip of one of Taurus' long horns

On the 8th-9th the Moon will wave at Leo's bright Regulus as that springtime constellation bows out westward in the early evening. And Virgo's Spica will find the Moon occupying its space the 13th.

But Spica will get to shine out beside the Moon on August 9th-10th. Then the Moon will set about midnight the 12th-13th to let the Perseid meteor show proceed sans its competition. Closely following the Perseids early on the 13th and extending through the 16th Mars and Jupiter will slide past each other. The Moon and Saturn will be buddies as they rise during the mid-evening the 20th. Come dawn of the 27th the participants in July's foursome will appear but with Jupiter to the lower right of the Moon, El Nath to lower left, and Mars below all three.

The Moon will be new July 5th (5p57) and August 4th (6a13), full July 21st (5a17), August 19th (1p26).
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Unplugged Dru Clarke



June 4th a lightning strike took out our satellite reception and “Doc Martin” went black: it was a great episode I had seen before but my husband hadn’t, and I was sore that he would be deprived of the climax and resolution of a tense drama. Directions for trouble-shooting didn’t pan out so I reported to the corporation about our signal loss. A technician was scheduled to come two days later between the hours of 8 and 12, so I locked up the dogs, sent regrets to my breakfast group that always meets on that day during that time frame, and waited: at 12:01, disgruntled and suffering flickering screen withdrawal, I called and cancelled our service as the “techi” never showed (not having offered a reason, either by phone or written note if the person had arrived and missed us in the barn.) Our new fiber optic service couldn’t be scheduled until a WEEK later, so we were faced with NO television for seven days!

Well...here was an opportunity to do other things, like... well, what? We both love to read so that was an expanded option, and each of us has a pile of unread books and the intermittent wet weather encouraged that. We, both retired, usually took our meals in front of a news program (breakfast, lunch, AND dinner) and sometimes those sit-down times lengthened into watching re-runs or PBS specials. I was grateful that “A Gentleman in Moscow” series had ended so we wouldn’t miss that (the book, one of the most moving I’d read in a very long time) and we weren’t following NBA games, tennis, or hockey. A commiserating friend said that the only notable moment we missed was the elderly vet kissing Zelensky at the D-Day memorial. We were beginning to be grateful for not having to listen to endless rants of the

persecuted and opinions of pundits. So, we spent more time outside, expanding chore time and catching up on small things that needed attending to that had been put off ‘til we had ‘more time’ (which we had now). We took longer rides in our atv (it already has almost 10,000 miles on it) to check out what was blooming in our and neighbors’ pastures – death camas had given way to penstemon, coneflower, Old Plainsman - and roadsides – butterfly milkweed and prairie rose; watched water snakes mating on a slab of rock; learned how to use the Merlin app to record bird songs* (thanks Merry); lavished affection on our pets and did daily checks on our captive animals, spending extra time watching them graze, wade in the big pond, or nap in the shade. And taking endless photos of them doing all these things.

Meals we began eating at the kitchen table, sitting facing one another – something we hadn’t done in years – and listened to the RADIO, then put on cd’s we hadn’t played in years that brought back memories of our earlier times. We shared stories (I finally heard the full tale of how he lost the tip of his finger in a combine, working harvest crew one summer) and I got to look, really look, at a man changed by time, but still, at the core, the same.

Overall, we just slowed down. I’m not sure how all of those hours we gained were spent, but it didn’t seem as if we were much diminished by the loss of tv reception. The flat screen dominates a room and today seems an intrusion without redeeming value. And, when it’s up and running again, we will more than likely fall back into our old routine, but perhaps be more selective about what we allow into our home, and not feel as if there is nothing else to do to occupy our time, our minds, our hands. In fact, a mid-year resolution might be to just turn the damn thing off. Using the remote, of course.

* The first afternoon using Merlin ID for about 15 minutes, ten different birds were recorded, two of which I didn’t even know were here! (Red-eyed vireo and orchard oriole)



Solomon's Seal



Flannel Mullein

Photos by Dru Clarke

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Jim Koelliker

p. 4 Prairie Falcon July 2024

The complete Birdathon report can be found on our website:
<https://www.nfhas.org/document-center.cfm?fx=R5WKBSF92Z9Z621E>

[illegible]



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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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