

INSECTS- Dr. Ellen Welti

Wednesday, July 29th, 2 pm, Groesbeck Rm. Public Library



Dr. Ellen Welti is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Biology at Kansas State University working on grassland insect communities. Her work has spanned North America's Great Plains and beyond with previous positions held in Oklahoma, Montana, and Germany. Insects represent a high proportion of animal diversity and face a number of threats to their populations.

Considering the critical ecosystem services provided by insects including pollination, decomposition of feces and carcasses, nutrient cycling, and acting as a key food source for many predators—including the majority of bird species—declines in insect populations should be given greater conservation priority.

Welti will discuss a number of reasons that insect populations are changing, Come and learn why.

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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

July 2 - Board Meeting, Manhattan Public Library
Study Room 1, at 5:30 pm

July 8, 15, 22, 29 Help @ Alsop Bird Sanctuary Garden
MLK Jr. Blvd and Laramie 8-10 am

July 26 - Birding - Last Sunday of the month 1:00 pm
Meet at Anneberg Pk. by the southern shelter
near the pond

July 29 - PROGRAM: Dr. Ellen Welti presentation
2 pm Groesbeck Rm. Public Library



Evening Glow

Dru Clarke

Years ago, when we first bought our ranch land, and before we lived here (it had been decades since the house was occupied), there were no other residences within a mile of our border. The road was dirt and 'unimproved', and woods and prairie grazing pastures skirted our parcel. The lane to the house was bordered on the south side by a steep rise covered by native grasses and forbs and trees of various ages. Only wild things inhabited the land, although we were pasturing some horses here. One summer evening we came to check on them and along the lane it seemed a festival of lights was on: the fireflies were exuberantly flashing their abdomens, an orgy of reproductive delight and hope. It was an awesome spectacle, and one that has not repeated in the eighteen years we have lived here. Until this summer.

more than 2000 species and here we have a few, the pyralis (3/8-1/2"), whose lights are yellow, and the scintillating who is smaller (1/4 – 3/8") than the pyralis. If you look closely at the body of these, the pronotum, the first segment of the covering on the thorax, extends over the head and is colored a rosy pink and washed-out yellow with a black spot in the center. The Pennsylvania firefly, a bit bigger than the pyralis, has a head that is visible, similarly colored to the other species, but with upper wings (elytra – know that they are beetles and not flies or bugs) with yellow bands along the midline and a slim, pale stripe down the middle. These flash green instead of yellow. By the way, the chemical activated by oxygen to make the light is luciferin, an ironic reference to the devil, probably assigned when folks didn't know the origin of this cold glow.



After the sun sinks below the trees and there is only a subtle dim light in the western sky, the time of gloaming, our meadow awakens, and golden, and sometimes green, flashes erupt skyward. A random answering light emanates from between the blades of grasses, often a few seconds later, as if the respondent, a recumbent female, had to consider whether to answer. If it is affirmative, and a union occurs, eggs are laid which become larvae that burrow into the soil, remaining there often for years. Adult fireflies don't feed, so live only a short while, but the larvae are voracious and dine primarily on snails and slugs and other insect larvae. We've noticed this year that there is a population explosion of land snails, oozing their way over slick surfaces, adorning overturned pails, snoozing undercover like children with their blankets pulled up over their heads, reluctant to get up in the morning.

With recent severe storms, we worried that the fireflies would be drowned out, but somehow they have survived and return nightly to delight our eyes. Worldwide, there are

Fireflies' populations worldwide are declining due to several factors: pesticides, light pollution, and loss of suitable habitat. At home, we can control these by providing an undisturbed area with litter and cover for the larvae to thrive, restraint in the use of insecticides (we ask the county to refrain from spraying along the road), and turning off lights that aren't really necessary. Darkness is a requisite for firefly communication to be effective. Disrupting their earnest attempts at courtship by our obsessive need for light is thoughtless and downright rude (from the firefly's point of view). So, turn down the lights and take a walk outside to enjoy and marvel at one of nature's wonders.

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Vigilance



“Vigilance” by Kansas artist Alan Tollakson features a bison cow and calf pairing carved from solid limestone, and is intended to serve as a lasting symbol of the region, its ecology and the importance of environmental stewardship.

Commissioned by Karen and John McCulloh. The McCulloh family also wanted to dedicate Vigilance to Jan Garton, a private citizen who, alongside a dedicated group of individuals, took on the responsibility of protecting the well-being of Cheyenne Bottoms. Through their determination and commitment, they helped preserve and restore this critical prairie wetland so it could continue to be enjoyed and appreciated for generations to come.

Jan was a long-time member of NFHAS, and worked on many of our projects

2026 Financial Report

Patricia Yeager

Northern Flint Hills Audubon has two fund raisers yearly - the Birdathon and the Bird Seed Sale. Also, we encourage donations and memberships throughout the year. You, our donors, have the right to ask, "Where does the money go?"

How NFHAS spends money and earns money has been remarkably consistent over the last 20 years. Here are the projections for 2026.

EXPENSES:

Property tax (Michel-Ross Preserve and Alsop Bird Sanctuary Trust).....	965.84
Printing and postage to mail paper newsletters.....	3200.00
Website annual domain listing.....	290.00
Liability insurance for properties.....	900.00
Online bank charge.....	60.00
Maintenance (Bluebird trails, signs, property repair, trash disposal).....	350.00
Gardens (Alsop bird sanctuary and Sojourner Truth butterfly garden)....	500.00
Meals (for guest speakers and occasional volunteer appreciation).....	200.00
Utility bill (City of Manhattan for irrigation only at Alsop Bird Sanctuary) 250.00	
Mowing and trimming at Michel-Ross Preserve.....	1,200.00
Birdseed (purchased for bird seed sale).....	1,000.00
Sales tax (bird seed sale).....	150.00
Christmas Bird Count tally dinner- kitchen and space fee.....	100.00
USPS post office box.....	200.00
TOTAL	9,365.84

INCOME SOURCES:

National Audubon (based on memberships from our area).....	700.00
Bird Seed sale profit.....	800.00
Investment interest.....	700.00
Memorials (200-500).....	350.00
Bird Seed Sale profit.....	800.00
Birdathon (3,000-4,000).....	3,500.00
TOTAL.....	6,850.00

We have managed to find the rest of the money in years past because you donated more when we asked. THANK YOU!

2026 Financial Report

While reviewing these numbers, if you found yourself thinking that we could do better, you are just the person we need. Please volunteer to be NFHAS treasure. We also need a secretary.

Our current treasurer has graduated and so there is a vacancy for you. Our next board meeting is at the Manhattan Public Library Aug. 4 at 5:30 pm in study room 1.

June is the beginning of the new fiscal year so now is the time to start. We also need a secretary so we encourage any member to volunteer for that position as well. Join us and help brainstorm the coming year.

Northern Flint Hills Audubon is a 501C3 (nonprofit) organization with IRS

Our tax ID is 48-1085966

REMINDER:

NO NEWSLETTER IN AUGUST.

We remember Ann Feyerharm

Ann Feyerharm, a wonderful, kind woman passed away in May. She opened her house to the NFHAS for several birding outings--a house she designed on the Tuttle Lake. She was a docent on the Konza as well. Those of us who knew her will miss her.

You may read her obit at: <https://www.ymlfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Ann-Stewart-Feyerharm?obId=48702737>

Thank you Kent Yeager

A BIG THANK YOU to Kent Yeager for picking up an old sofa someone dumped at our Mitchel-Ross Preserve, 739 Canyon Dr., Stagg Hill. It is so sad that some people think it is ok to leave their trash on the preserve. But then there are people like Kent Yeager that renew our faith.

Congratulation and Best Wishes to Jacob Riggs

He graduated from KSU this past spring and has a job in Kansas City. Jacob was our Treasurer this past year and President of the KSU Birding club. What a joy to work with such an enthusiastic birder! He has helped with many of our projects and led the Student Club. We hope we can continue to be involved with these young people.



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

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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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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

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