



So give Dave a hug, handshake, (whatever feels right) the next time you see him and tell him **THANKS!!**

And give Brett all your support.

Brett Sandercock



After 16 years of coordinating/ compiling the Manhattan Christmas Bird Census, **Dave Rintoul** is passing the baton (or binoculars) to Brett Sandercock.

Dave deserves our thanks and admiration for all he has done for our chapter.

He couldn't have found a better replacement. Brett is a Professor of Wildlife Biology, and has participated in the CBC since coming to Manhattan.

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

**Dec 1 - Board Meeting 6 p.m.**  
Home of Tom & MJ Morgan

**Dec 13 - Saturday Morning Birding**  
8 a.m. Sojourner Truth Park

**Dec 20 - Manhattan Christmas Bird Count**  
see page 4

**Dec 21 - Olsburg Christmas Bird Count**  
(gjeffrey@twinvalley.net or 468-3587)



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

The shorter days of December are upon us with the earliest sunsets occurring from the 4th to the 13th (and the latest sunrises holding off till the first week of January).

The existence of the seasonal affective disorder--SAD--by which people suffer depression and other ills from the paucity of winter daylight is not news, but there are other things to be learned about other effects of the variability of sunlight, and the variability of our reception of it.

It's a reception that is affected not only by our modern environments and habits, but also by the yellowing of the lenses of our eyes that comes with aging, and as well as other internal factors, for by one report even the pupils of blind mice contracted in response to light they could not see.

Last June the Economist looked at the subject of light with various experts, noting that sunlight comes in three particular flavors: blue, red and green; blue being the morning color signaling us to be up and active, with relaxing red and green predominating later in the day. Somehow I have to square this information with my own observation that one of the pleasantest times of a day comes with the "long light" of evening, in which one's surroundings take on a special aura, which I'm told results from the short waves of blue light limning every item in view with a distinctness not available at other times. And I can't decide whether this effect is more arousing or relaxing.

Whichever, there was consensus that a blue light source might be useful for people who, contrary to normal circadian rhythms, work through the night. At the same time, many people are getting too much blue light from electronic screens, light whose arousing tendencies can interfere with sleep, and

sleep is an essential ingredient to good health.

The general advice was that, short of overexposure, to get as much sunlight as one can by going outside, opening shades, moving desks, etc. Use electronic display screens as much as possible by day and turn them off two hours before bedtime. Buy an extra desk lamp, and have more romantic dinners with the lights dimmed. Install f.lux software on your computer, a free download that cuts blue glare later in the day. There was also mention of Jins – not JINS, the Journal of the International Neurological Society – but a manufacturer of eyeglasses with blue-light reducing properties.

There will quite a bit of light in the darkness this month for many of the evening and overnight constellations are bold ones, with Orion the boldest, between Taurus with its bright eye, Aldeberan, ahead, and the Canis Major, the Big Dog, with our brightest star, Sirius, behind. Sailing along more northward will be Cassiopeia as a W, and Perseus, as whatever you want to make of him, in the Milky Way. Behind them, half in and half out of the lactose stream will be Auriga, the pentagonal charioteer, with bright Capella, and slightly behind him the Gemini Twins with just their feet touching the milk. Eridanus, the River, will be zig-zagging, though faintly, below Taurus.

The Geminid meteor shower could be sending a couple sparks a minute in the early evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>, becoming less noticeable when the Moon rises. The Moon competes with Jupiter for notice as they both rise in the late evening of 10<sup>th</sup>, with Leo's Regulus joining in the 11<sup>th</sup>, the Moon between and to the right.

The Moon then passes below Virgo's Spica in the early light of the 17<sup>th</sup>, and below Saturn in the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup>. It gets close to the right of Mars as night falls on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

The Moon becomes new at 7p36 the 21<sup>st</sup>, almost in sync with the winter solstice which will occur just a little earlier at 5p03. The Moon will have been full the 6<sup>th</sup> at 6a27.

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# Hiding in Plain Sight

Dru Clarke



The deer stood perfectly still in the road as my truck rounded the bend. Nonchalantly, it seemed, it glanced back over its shoulder, gauging that direction as a route of escape, then took a few tentative steps forward, crouched low to fit through the loose strands of wire, and disappeared into brush. Within seconds I was at the place it had moved into and through, but it was nowhere to be seen. It may have been hiding in plain sight, but I was blind to its presence. It was the color of autumn, and autumn it had become.

Gamekeepers and hunters have tried to mimic the camouflage of animals for eons by wearing specially crafted garb that echoes the colors of the animals' native landscape. For centuries, Irish and Scottish farmers and land laborers wore clothing of a coarse woolen that was later modified into the rich and varied tweeds adopted by the estates and clans in Scotland: the clan tartans are worn by members of the same family while the estate tweeds identified people who lived and worked on and were members of the family who owned the estate, perhaps the first truly democratic fabric.

The origin of the name "tweed" for this cloth may have resulted from a transcription error by a London merchant who, on an order, misread "tweel" to be "tweed," also the name of a river in Scotland: "tweel is the Scottish word for twill," the diagonal line created in the fabric by alternating warp over weft threads during the weaving. The textile has been known as tweed from then to now.

Glenfeshie, a black and white check with a red windowpane, was the first estate tweed (around 1835) woven for ghillies (attendants for hunting parties) and gamekeepers. From a distance, it looked like, and blended in with, the granite outcroppings of the highlands. The colors for the hand-dyed threads of yarn originated from local natural dyes derived from native plants, especially lichens of the genus, *Parmelia*. Blackberries, fuchsia, gorse and moss provided additional hues.

Lovat, the name of the Scottish green tweed made from marled blue and yellow yarns, was the inspiration for Lord Elcho to develop a khaki cloth worn by the London Scottish regiment, perhaps the first military camouflage uniform.

The names of tweed are based on the type of sheep wool used, the region where it originated, or a brand name, like Harris Tweed, the best known of all. Harris tweed is woven only on four islands in the Outer Hebrides Islands and items are clearly labeled with the Harris Tweed certification mark, established in 1909. Not enough wool could be produced on the islands so today wool from the UK is brought in to fill needs. Cheviot wool from sheep of the Cheviot Hills of Northumberland

and the Scottish border yield a yarn that is rough and heavier than other types. Shetland is shaggy but fine, and Merino is fine and soft. Merino's history in the British Isles begins with a small herd as a gift from the King of Spain in 1765 to a cousin in Saxony. Merino sheep wool was highly regarded by the Spanish and no sheep could be exported from Spain until the laws were relaxed. By the end of the century there were 4 million in the UK!

Gamekeeper tweeds are exceptionally heavy (700 + g. or 24oz./yd.). To "test" the sporting tweeds, developed to blend with the landscape, eight color variations were experimented with to determine which was least visible. Thorn-proof tweeds, made with highly twisted fibers to toughen the cloth and provide resistance to punctures and tears, are also self-repairing (one works the "wound" until it "heals"). Donegal tweed, an Irish contribution, is replete with neps and slubs and gives the article a coarse and sporty look. One of my favorite jackets, rough to the touch, is a jumble of color reminiscent of a Donegal.

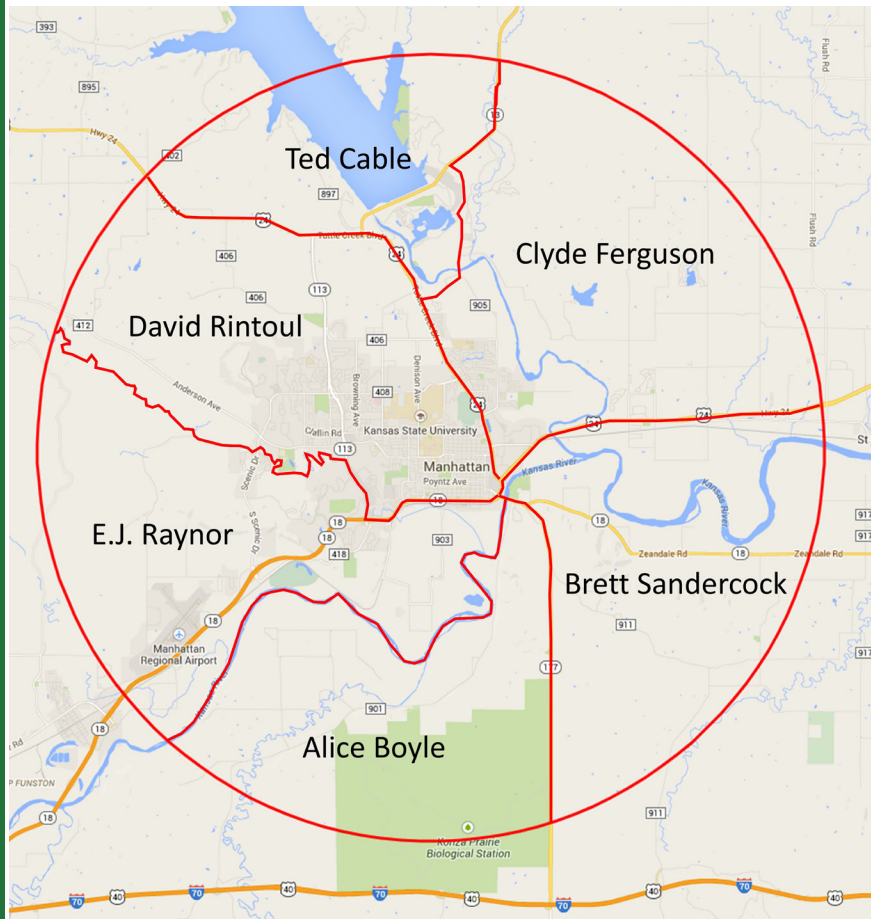
Tweed today is usually associated with professorial academic types, but it has been adopted by the 'young fogey' and hipster subcultures in Europe who wear it while bicycling in large groups. Tweed has sometimes been used to cover retro guitar amplifiers (think Eric Clapton) and it is the required dress as a full Norfolk jacket (long, with box pleats front and back, expandable pockets and a full belt) for Sherlock Holmes in all his incarnations (think Basil Rathbone and Benedict Cumberbatch). My husband owns a half Norfolk jacket, belted just in the back, and he looks dashing in it.

Autumn is the season for wearing tweed: its typical colors blend with the brown gone-to-seed wildflowers and the rust of prairie grasses as well as the woody shrubs' leaves and the leaves of the shedding trees, and deer seen disappearing into the landscape. Today I saw a gooseberry bush giving in to the pull of fall, its leaves rosy and margined with a last stand of green. The shades would make a wonderful tweed jacket if only I had the knowledge of how to extract them and transfer them to yarn. According to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's publication "Dye Plants and Dyeing", Osage orange bark yields yellow and gold, with chrome as a mordant, sumac a yellowish tan if alum is the mordant, grey if ferrous sulfate. Lasting reds and satisfactory blues are elusive in our native plants. Pokeweed's magenta juice fades to a dull brown over time.

If you bird, or hunt, cycle or hike, boat or fish, or merely go for leisurely walks on these growing crisp days, break out your tweed and wear it with a swagger. We old fogeys might just blend in with the landscape and we'll be hiding in plain sight.

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## 66th Manhattan Christmas Bird Count Dec. 20, 2014

Six teams of bird watchers will look for birds on December 20 in the Manhattan Christmas Bird Count circle (see map above, 7.5 miles in radius and centered at Anderson Hall). New participants are always welcome and expert birding skills are not required! If you would like to participate, please contact Brett Sandercock (see contact info above) he will assign you to a group that needs extra help. If you live in the area and wish to join a group in one of the six sections, you can also contact the group leaders by phone or email.

The count will start at dawn and end at dusk, unless you are part of a dedicated group looking for owls in the dark. The count will be held in sun, rain or snow, but arrangements can be made if you can only participate for part of the day. We would also like to invite folks who live within the count circle to count birds at their feeders on December 20 as part of the surveys. If you would like to help with feeder-watching, contact Brett for instructions and a checklist.

Count numbers and number of species will be compiled for all groups and participants at the end of the day at the chili supper. Please join us to hear reports of the day's sightings and stories from the day's adventures! If you are unable to attend the compilation, you will need to send your bird records to the compiler before Christmas so that the records can be added to the total counts for the Manhattan CBC. We encourage all participants to submit their bird records to eBird and can provide assistance if anybody wants to learn more about this important resource for birding in Kansas!

#### **Manhattan Christmas Bird Count - Compilation and Chili Supper**

Join the NFHAS and fellow birders for a potluck supper at 6 pm on December 20, at the Seniors Service Center, 412 Leavenworth, Manhattan, KS. A few volunteers will prepare chili but please feel free to bring a sidedish to share. Free-will donations to NFHAS are also welcome. We encourage you to bring your own tableware to help us reduce the amount of trash. Enjoy good food, good companionship, and find out how this year's count compares to previous years! If you have any questions on what to bring for the supper or can help with setup, please contact Carla Bishop by phone (539-5129 or 532-1858) or email (cbishop@ksu.edu).

## The 114th Christmas Bird Count

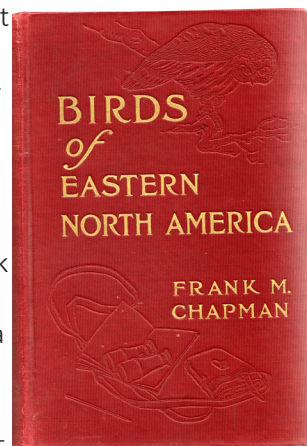
Prior to the turn of the century, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas “Side Hunt”: They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20th century, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a “Christmas Bird Census”—that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them.

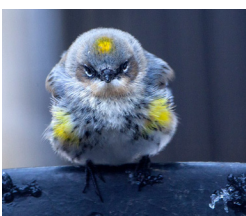
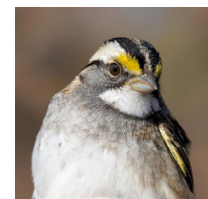
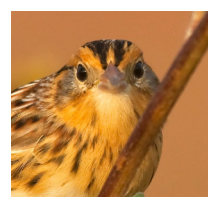
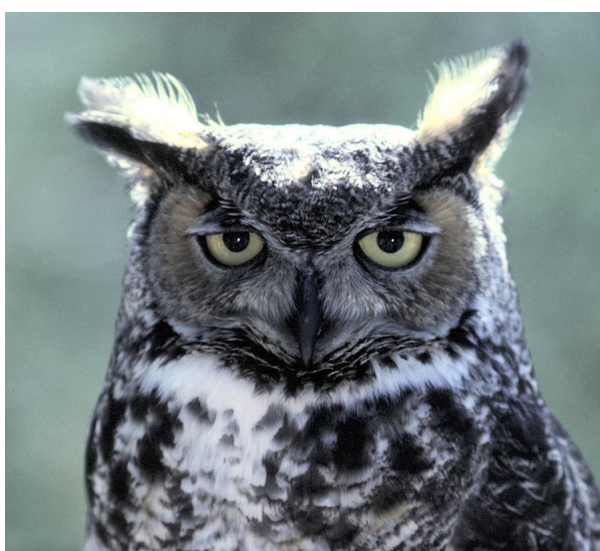
So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Frank M. Chapman and the enthusiasm of twenty-seven dedicated birders, twenty-five Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.



A self-taught ornithologist, Chapman was appointed assistant curator of ornithology and mammalogy (1888–1908) and curator of ornithology (1908–42) at the American Museum of Natural History, where he developed the habitat and seasonal bird exhibits. Beginning in 1887, he traveled widely, collecting and photographing birds. He was associate editor of *Auk* (1894), the leading U.S. ornithology journal of his day, and founded and edited the magazine *Bird-Lore* (1899). His most important works include *Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America* (1895), *The Distribution of Bird-Life in Colombia* (1917), *The Distribution of Birds of the Urubamba Valley, Peru* (1921), and *The Distribution of Bird-Life in Ecuador* (1926).



*Bird-Lore* was the immediate predecessor of Audubon magazine. It was first published in 1899 by Frank Chapman. The coverpiece described the magazine as the “Official Organ of the Audubon Societies” and “an illustrated bi-monthly magazine devoted to the study and protection of birds. The National Association of Audubon Societies purchased *Bird-Lore* from Chapman in 1935. After the National Association of Audubon Societies became the National Audubon Society in 1940, *Bird-Lore* became Audubon Magazine in 1941. The magazine’s name was changed to Audubon in 1966.



“The EYES  
have it”

DAVE RINTOUL’S  
AMAZING PHOTOS



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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, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250**. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society and include the **code C4ZJ040Z**. Questions about membership? Call 1-800-274-4201 or email the National Audubon Society [join@audubon.org](mailto:join@audubon.org). Website is [www.audubon.org](http://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](mailto:list_serve@ksu.edu)> and join in the discussions.

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