

NFHAS  
**50**  
YEARS

# 50th Anniversary CELEBRATION of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society

Dec. 5 - Lake Elbo Clubhouse  
(east of Manhattan, map on pg.7)

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**8:00 a.m.- 11:00 am** Meet at the Lake Elbo Clubhouse. We will bird Lake Elbo, Pott. Co. State Lake No. 2 and surrounding prairie. Coffee, milk, juice and breakfast sweet breads will be available.

**11:00 am** Break for lunch on your own (might be a food truck nearby)

**1:00 pm** Clubhouse will be open for you to browse the 50th year historical displays.

**2:00 pm** Speaker Perry Conway, the first Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society president, photographer, world traveler will give a program.

### Displays and bird ID quiz

**4:00 pm** CAKE

### Masks required for inside activities

RSVP appreciated by Dec. 2 - EMAIL - [cinraney@ksu.edu](mailto:cinraney@ksu.edu), or call 785-565- 3326 or mail you response to NFHAS P.O. Box 1932 Manhattan, KS 66505-1932

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



## prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 50, No. 3, November 2021

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## Upcoming Events

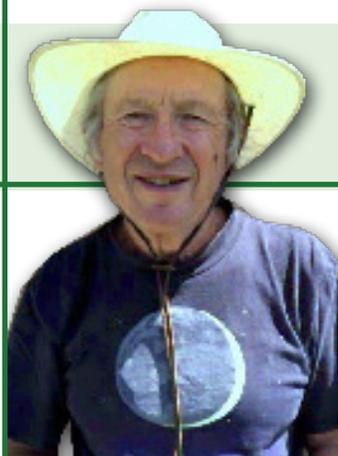
Nov. 2 - Board Meeting - 5:30 pm - Final Planning for 50th  
Sojourner Truth Park

**Nov. 7 - Birdseed PICKUP 9:30am-3 pm**  
**2041 Pillsbury Dr. (Stone house across Highway 177**  
**from Piano Store)**

NOV. 13, 8 am Washington Marlatt Memorial park

DEC. 5 - 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION LAKE ELBO CLUBHOUSE

CBC Save the Dates: (More info in Dec. PF)  
Manhattan CBC Dec. 18th. Wakefield Dec. 19th,  
Olsburg CBC - Dec. 21th, Junction City Dec. 27



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

As a change from the solemn news of our changing climate, comes a November kit of views, stacked rhyme upon rhyme.

Lucky November can do whatever it pleases  
Give us Indian summers or else wintery freezes.

Some trees drop their leaves and we all know it  
While evergreens do, too, but they don't show it.

Elections result in some winners and more losers;  
Standard Time returns, an extra hour for snoozers.

Northern hawks show up for some easier living;  
Some folks will serve up a great big Thanksgiving.

Some bands will get to march in football arenas;  
Sheriffs on duty will keep on serving subpoenas

Geese on the wing will call as they are flying;  
Flocks of ads will urge people out to go buying.

The atmosphere changes as nights grow dark sooner.  
Fine pianos will maybe need a visit from a tuner.

Chorales might begin to practice their carols;  
Fishing rods may need a check for loosened ferrules.

Garden hoses need to be now fully drained;  
They may lay forgotten since the last time it rained.

Swimming pools stand empty, tires lose their pressure;  
Check them with a trusted gauge. Do not be a guessure.

School tests are growing more and more particular;  
Schoolkids are going more for the extra-curricular.

Wood piles are likely tall where they will be needed  
Garden plots are lying bare, if harvested and weeded

Overhead the stars of Pegasus dimly will twinkle  
In a sky that's arched and smooth, without a single wrinkle.

In that sky on November 3rd Mercury will be faintly showing through the dawnlight, below the Moon. Throughout the month Venus will move into Sagittarius and be brightly gleaming left of center—that is, in the SW, as she sets soon after the Sun. A crescent Moon will manage to be a companion on the 7th.

On the 10th, more toward NW in the evening twilight, in Capricornus, the Moon will be at the bottom of a triangle with Saturn to the upper right, Jupiter to the upper left.

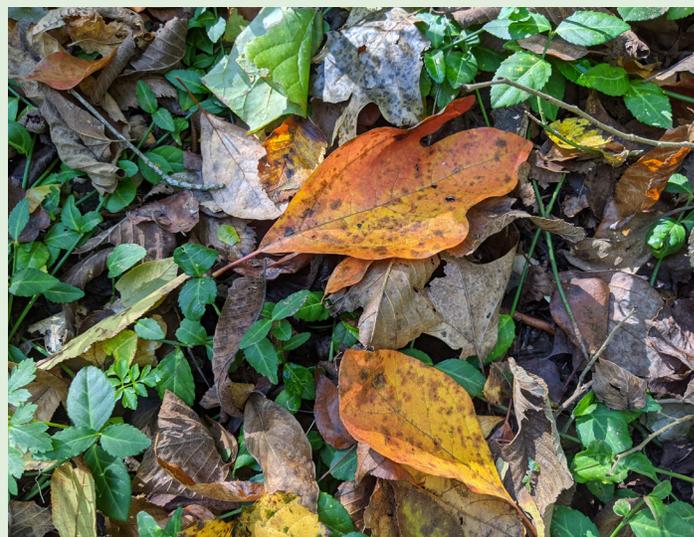
Then in the after-midnight hours of the 19th, starting at 1a18, the Moon will perform a partial, yet nearly, total eclipse. At 3a03 the Earth's shadow will cover 98% of it, leaving the remaining sliver at least partially shaded. The show ends at 6a06, with daylight as the encore.

That done, on the 23rd the Moon cozies close to the star, Pollux, the brightest of the Gemini Twins, though a more evenly spaced lineup occurs the 24th. (Castor is officially listed as the brighter star, because of an error in an early observation, and though named twins, Pollux, the actual brighter, is said to be a giant singleton and Castor a combination of six observed as one).

The Moon finishes the month moving from left to right below Regulus, the star at the bottom of Leo the Lion's backward question mark in the dawnlight of the 26th-27th. And then locating Virgo's lonely bright star, Spica, by hanging above her in the dawn of the 30th.

The Moon is new on the 4th at 4p15 CST and technically full during its eclipse the 19th at 2a57.

© 2021 Peter Zachary Cohen



## Georgia, Land of the Golden Fleece (and more) Dru Clarke



Dropped through a portal into another realm where time seemed to be warped between ancient and modern times, my time in Georgia was coming to a close. At our final supra, a festive dinner where a toastmaster waxes eloquent on a theme, to be taken up by others throughout the meal, our intrepid and passionate leader (Rafael Galvez), voice breaking, thanked all – his fellow guides and participants – for making the entire experience memorable. In all, we either saw or heard 159 species, many lifers for many of the participants, and most, new to me, the novice traveler.

From subtropical climate along the Black Sea at Batumi (the largest port) to the snowy heights of the Greater Caucasus in Svaneti, to the semiarid wine region to a volcanic plain, we experienced what seemed a continent in a republic the size of West Virginia.

Jason and the argonauts quest has some basis in fact: in the rushing streams of the mountains, indigenous tribes would anchor a fleece of a sheep to catch flakes of gold that would settle out on the dense wool. They would then dry the fleece and shake the particles of gold out. While we missed that particular action, we did see snow cocks and Caucasian grouse at the edge of the snowfields, and celebrated our luck with shots of chacha, a grape vodka like the Italian grappa. The birds that caused the most excitement, however, were the gold crest, the bee-eater, the ruddy shelduck, the hoopoe, black redstart, and the wallcreeper – all in different ecosystems.

The second to the last day, as we exited breakfast, our driver shouted, “a lammergeier! Go get Dru!” I had wanted to see this bird more than any, as its life and looks are startling. Known as the bearded vulture, it subsists on the marrow of bones which it drops from great heights. We saw several more before the day’s end. We missed this bird at the Sakhalvasho raptor count site where volunteers spend weeks counting the south-migrating raptors (black kites, griffon vultures, steppe eagles, harriers, and more).

The roads were clotted with free roaming cattle, horses, flocks of sheep (these tended by shepherders walking or on horse back, with Caucasian mastiffs as guard dogs, ears clipped so wolves don’t rip them off), and stray dogs by the thousands, many ‘at home’ in front of businesses. The local ones had yellow ear tags indicating they had been neutered.

Our meals were filled with fresh fruits and vegetables (although I don’t care to see another aubergine for a while) and the wine perfect, fermented in underground clay casks and undoctored by any additives. Each family has its own vineyard.

At our last checklist, Rafael asked what our favorite three things were of the tour: most praised the guides (who went all out to find elusive birds and care for our needs), the landscapes, and a bird.

While I waited for days to see the lammergeier, I was most taken with an ordinary looking heron, the squacco, whose washed out, drab body was transformed when it spread its wings to reveal a snowy white. It hunts at the edge of wetlands, patiently hunched in an easily overlooked posture. It was so unexpected that it was not even included on the checklist!



As I write this, I am haunted by the polyphonic chanting – an eerily dissonant singing – done mostly by men, each chant inspired by ancient events ( a successful hunt, a brave warrior, a lullaby for an infant) indigenous to the region.

The tour for next year is already filled, but if you are yearning for a special experience in a little known land with extraordinary and talented guides, you may consider for the future visiting the land of the golden fleece, Georgia.

© 2021 Dru Clarke, Oct.

© Ricky Owen/ Macaulay Library  
at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
ML376665491

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

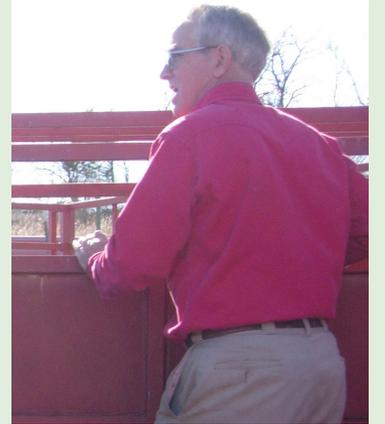
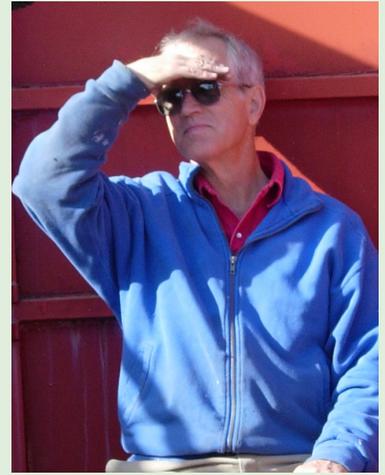
# In Memory of Dr. Chris Smith

He helped with many Christmas Bird Counts and was a compiler for one of the areas. He also helped with the Olsburg CBC.

On September 18, 2021 Christopher C. Smith, loving father of three and grandfather of two, passed away at the age of 83.

He worked in the Kansas State University Dept of Biology from 1970-2003. He published many scientific articles that were cited hundreds of times. He and Ann moved to Mount Vernon WA 10 years ago to be closer to their grandchildren. He touched the hearts and minds of students, faculty, friends and family and will be missed by all.

During his tenure at K-State (1970-2003), Chris taught Principles of Biology, Organismic Biology, Ecology, and Population Biology (genetics), courses in Mammalogy, Ornithology, Evolution and Population Genetics and Evolutionary Ecology. His commitment to education led him to be recognized with a Stamey Award for excellence in teaching. Chris also led and participated in numerous intersession field trip courses on the Biology of the Southwest. A prolific researcher, Chris's broad interests crossed the disciplines of ecology, evolution, and mammalian social behavior; he is an authority on co-evolution of squirrels and oak trees. His quality of research led him to be an elected fellow of the AAAS. He was also a faithful member of the "Burn Crew" at the Konza Prairie Biological Station. On a side note, Chris was coach of the first Biology Faculty intramural championship basketball team in the mid-70s, his "jump" shot from the top of the key was missed after retirement. We're thankful for Chris's 33 years of service to K-State as well as his lifetime of accomplishments.



The annual Christmas (winter) bird count will be December 19, 1987. There will be no participation this year. The group will get together for supper and meet at a yet unknown location. (All groups meet at 5:45 PM.)

## THE PRAIRIE FALCON

DECEMBER 1987

NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P. O. BOX 1932 MANHATTAN, KS 66502



Group meet to meet or to the group during

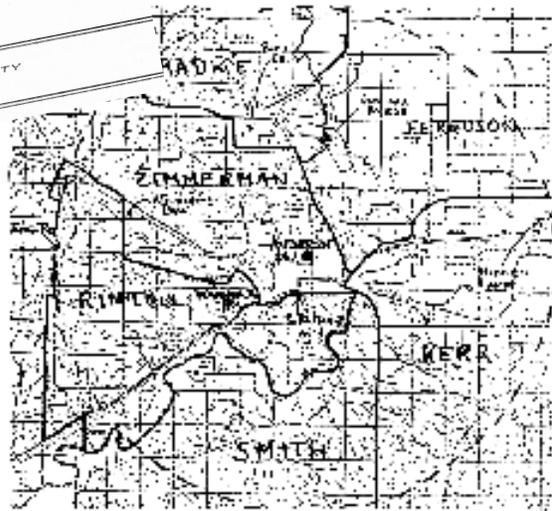
count area is divided into six sectors, each with a group leader (see map):

Gary Radke (532-6124). Tuttle Creek Res., River Pond area, Pheasant Creek, Tuttle Cove. Waterfowl, gulls, eagles are the specialty species for this group. If you can't reach Gary, call Elmer Finck (532-5629 or 537-1171).

Clyde Ferguson (532-6730 or 539-4856). Cedar Creek, Casement Road bottoms, Blue River, State Lake, Lake Elbo. Waterfowl—especially diving ducks, Carolina wren, eagles and other raptors, mixed species flocks of forest birds.

Duane Kerr (532-5634 or 456-2771). Swamp Angel, Kansas River bottoms, Hidden Lakes, Deep Creek valley. Waterfowl, eagles, gulls, prairie chicken; good mix of prairie and bottomland birds.

Chris Smith (532-6658 or 539-6918). Konza Prairie, Kansas River at Ashland Bottoms, McDowell Creek. Good raptors, red-headed woodpeckers, other riparian birds, prairie chickens, wild turkey.



David Rintoul (532-6663 or 537-0781). Ft. Riley edge, Kansas River bottoms, Eureka lake, Keats woods. Waterfowl, sparrows, raptors, mixed forest birds.

John Zimmerman (532-6659 or 537-0238). Wildcat Creek valley, Rogers' Pond, town and campus, Keats road Sparrows, pigeons, blackbirds and forest edge birds.

There will probably also be an early morning (very early morning!) owl prowl, and a float trip on the Kaw River. Contact John Zimmerman about these and for general information.

# Past Prairie Wings excerpts

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Three members of our chapter received special recognition at the May 9 dinner.

\*Marge Muenzenberger received a certificate of meritorious service "in grateful recognition of outstanding contributions to the advancement of the purposes and goals of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society." Since 1978 Marge has served on every committee and held every office except that of treasurer. Thanks, Marge!

Annual conservation awards "in appreciation for outstanding contributions towards the conservation, preservation and enhancement of the natural environment" were presented to:

\*Jan Garton for her dedication in pursuing conservation issues, especially those concerning acid rain, Kansas water problems and natural areas in Manhattan. Jan is also spearheading an effective campaign to save Cheyenne Bottoms. Through her contributions to the newsletter and her announcements at monthly meetings she helps keep us all informed of major conservation issues.

\*Don Yockey for his conservation projects. Don has built over 300 nest boxes for birds--140 of which have been donated to the Kansas Fish and Game Commission. Other boxes were given to our chapter or to individuals for placement in suitable nesting habitat. Don and Sue have registered their land as an official wildlife sanctuary and have planted 1,800 trees to provide diverse habitat.



## BIRDERS' BLOOPERS

BELIEVE IT OR DON'T (but it's all true)

According to a Kansas City radio station, a woman reported seeing dark-eyed junkies in her yard. No comment.

A local radio announcer reported that thousands of geese were flying over Manhattan and landing at the KSU football field. How about gulls?

If you were going to design a brochure about Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, what bird would you use for pictures? Snowy plover? American bittern? Believe it or don't, an old Quivira bird checklist is illustrated with drawings of American crows!

Marais des Cygnes, a waterfowl refuge in eastern Kansas, takes its name from "marsh of swans" and was named by early French trappers and traders. Many historians believe that what the settlers actually saw were American white pelicans!

A prominent magazine mislabeled a color photograph of a red-bellied woodpecker, "red-headed woodpecker."

Sandhill crane hunters in New Mexico found that the ones along the river were easiest to shoot because they stood still. Maybe those great blue herons will be more heedful next time!

At Milford Reservoir, someone thought the fish-cleaning station was a chapel!

The Kansas State Fair had an attraction that advertised, "See The Giant French Sewer Rats." It's not everywhere that one can pay money to see South American tapirs.

The honeybee was named official state insect of Kansas even though it's not native to our state!

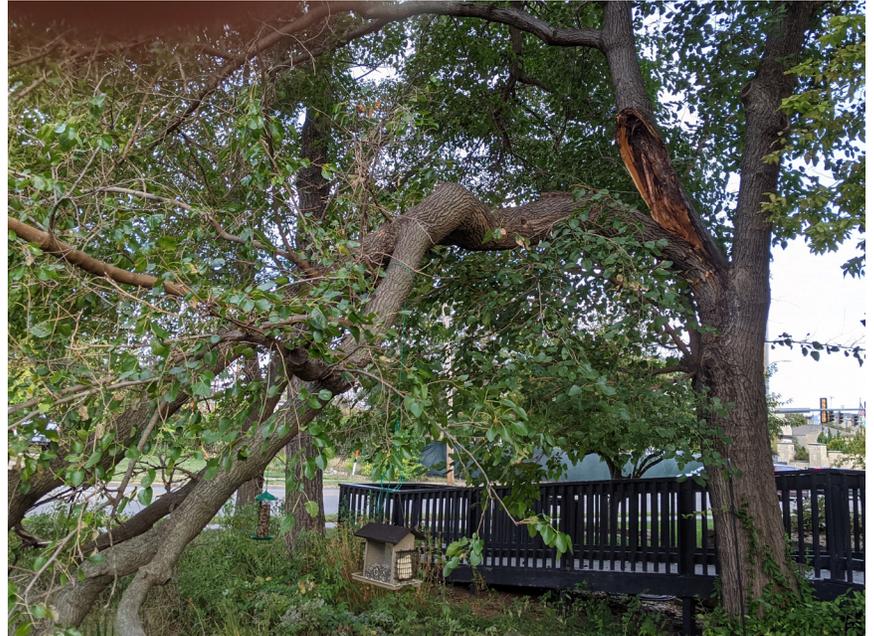
Believe it or don't, an Arkansas television personality held a captive red-legged hawk and spoke of the plight of the golden eagle!

The Wichita Health Department, thinking they were starlings, shot 400 purple martins. The Wichita Health Department, retroactively asked US Fish and Wildlife for a permit to shoot purple martins! ●  
Neil Schanker

## ALSOP Bird Sanctuary

A tree - well a very large part of a tree fell on the Alsop property.

Jacque Staats and Dick Oberst cut into manageable pieces and Gary Haden, Kent and Patricia Yeager loaded and hauled off four trailer loads. Honorable mention to Greg Wurst who volunteered to help Monday should there be more work needed to complete the job.



PATTY KLINE - our treasurer is retiring, we are **sad** to report. She would like to train the next treasure before she heads south.

So please consider joining the board as treasurer!

## Monthly Bird Walk: City Parks - Saturday, Nov. 13, 8 am

Patricia Yeager

### **Saturday morning birding -**

This month's birding will be at **Washington Marlatt Memorial Park**, at the intersection of Seth Childs Rd. and Marlatt - turn onto the park and continue to the second loop (North side of road) and park along the edge of the road.

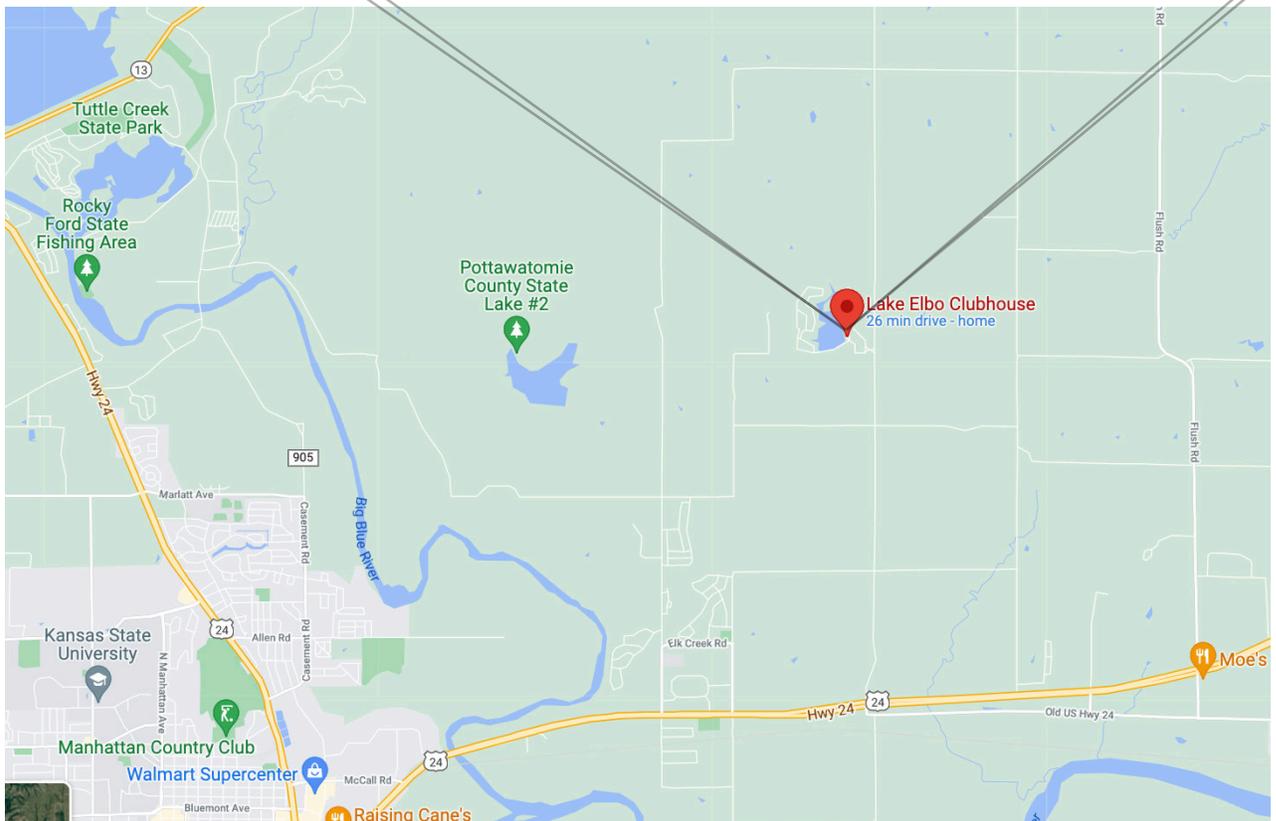
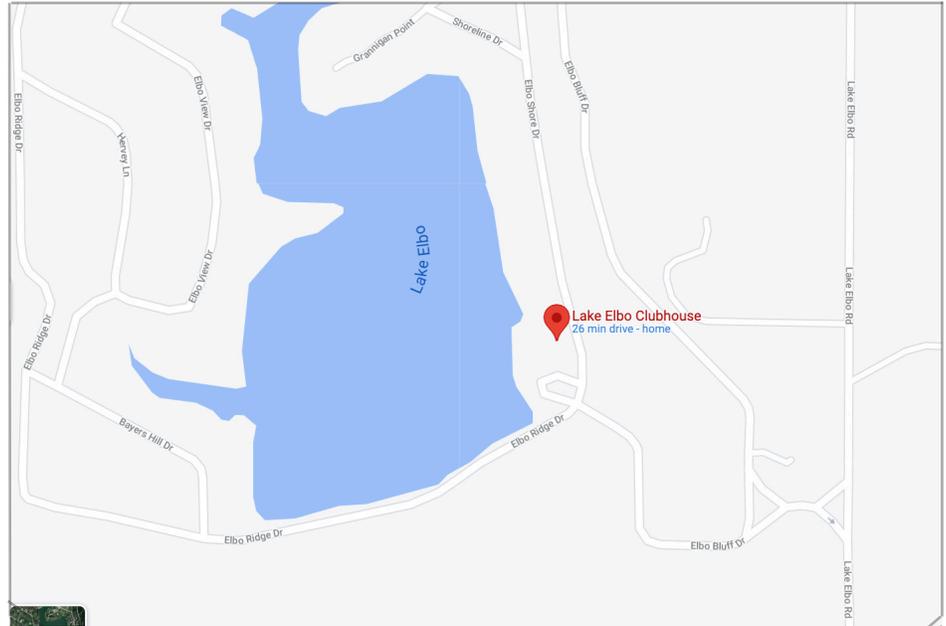
If you need a ride to the park, call Patricia 785-776-9593. Check the Prairie Falcon (or our website) each month for meeting location details.



NFHAS  
**50**  
YEARS

**COUNT DOWN**  
1 month till Dec. 5, 2021

LOCATION:  
Lake Elbo  
Clubhouse





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

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First President of NFHAS  
Perry Conway



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.

Also available online at [nfhas.org](http://nfhas.org)

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Also available online at [nfhas.org](http://nfhas.org)

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

**WE NEED YOU!** PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

**NFHAS Board**

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