



## GOATS FOR SUSTAINABLE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

**WHERE: Manhattan Public Library Auditorium**

**WHEN: Sunday JAN. 21 at 2:00 p.m.**

Michel-Ross Nature Preserve is owned by Northern Flint Hills Audubon. It is a 26-acre tract bordered by Stagg Hill Rd and Canyon Drive; and backyards of the residences on the east side of Dondee. We have been responsible stewards of this property over the past 20 years. Now, however, nature is giving us a problem. That is, BUSH HONEYSUCKLE. Bush honeysuckle is an invasive species and it certainly has invaded our forest preserve. We are considering the use of GOATS to control this problem. You may want to use goats on a property you own as well.

Join us for an informational meeting on this subject.

**SPEAKER:** Thad Rhodes, district forester for the State of Kansas will explain why Bush Honeysuckle is a problem to Kansas forests. He will report on the use of goats elsewhere and the advantages and disadvantages of this method of control.

**SPEAKER:** Jessica Boeckman, owner of Given Grace Farm and goat owner will explain the process of using goats to clear underbrush.

After the presentation a question and answer session will follow.

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

Jan. 2 - Board meeting - 5:30 Public Library or Zoom

Jan. 13 - Saturday Birding Walk - Michel-Ross Preserve  
Pickup trash along the way

Jan. 21 - Program: Using Goats for sustainable  
vegetation management (SEE ABOVE)

Feb. 6 - Board Meeting 5:30 via Zoom

Feb. 10 - Sat Morning Birding,  
leaves Sojourner Park at 8 am.

Feb. 18 - Spirit Bear - 2:00 pm Manhattan Public Library



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

It was a short sidebar news article informing those who read it that any discussion as to whether starfish had arms or legs is wholly semantic. There is no structure in those appendages that resembles those of our limbs or the legs of a spider or a bird's wing. All the tissue immediately under the creature's skin is head tissue. A starfish, a/k/a sea star, is basically a five pointed head.

So why call them starfish? Today's common knowledge is that stars are spherical; their light comes to us as dots as round as our Sun. Why then do we draw them so commonly as pentagons composed of a huddle of five triangles?

One idea is that it derives from the hieroglyphic depiction of a star. This symbol has five sticks all with one end joined at a central point and from there radiating out in close to equally separated directions, with one stick going vertically upward. Cuneiform symbols, also dating back to around 3000 b.c.e., have a few more strokes and in all that I've seen there's at least one stroke going vertically upward. The same holds true for the internet depictions of Mayan and Aztec stars.

By contrast, the five-pointed stars in the circle of thirteen on Betsy Ross's 1776 American flag all point outward from the circle. Only the top one has a vertically upward point. Present day Pakistani and Turkish flags both have five triangularly pointed stars, tilted slightly leftward toward the concave side of a crescent. I find there are reasons for the stars, but nothing mentioned about their orientation.

The Japanese emblem of the rising sun has a perfectly round sun, while, again from internet sources, their written reference to stars that seem vertically oriented with lateral points.

The Star of David is an ancient six-pointed configuration, with a vertical upward point, that has significance to a number of religions. It did not become a principle symbol of Judaism until the 17th century, so is more a subject of theological studies.

So why do round dots of light produce so many pointed reactions?

The answer seems to come part from anatomy, and the five points also partly from pragmatism. Start with the fact that it's humans who draw stars and human eyes contain a couple of sutures that refract incoming light so that those with sufficient acuity see a star's glow as multi-pointed. The most frequent seems to be five, and the folks who started depicting them had really dark skies to observe in. Actually no two eyes are necessarily alike and I read that some people who see the points can have a different number in each eye. The mighty Hubble telescope in space saw four-pointed stars because of some needed supports. And after all, points seem more eye-catching than circles. Five are more prominent than three, more interesting than a square four, and less complicated and easier to draw than six or more. Thus the creatures referred to above will seem less freakish since they can be called starfish, or sea stars.

As to planets, Jupiter, high in the southeast as darkness comes on, will be an evening exception. Saturn will be low in the SW and sink a little after seven, after brief visits with the Moon on the 13th and 14th. Venus, in departing Scorpius, will begin rising in the wee hours with Mercury coming up enough for viewing below Venus till the 27th. Mars will also be rising in the dawn hours, managing to be close to Mercury on that 27th.

Much of the Moon's recognizable visits will occur during daylight, yet apart from its visit with Saturn, the Moon will be north of Jupiter in the wee hours the 18th, and below Gemini's Pollux around 1 am. the 24th. It will be brighter closer to the Earth at 4a35 the 13th and not so bright further out at 2a14 the 29th. New at 5a57 the 11th, full 11p54 the 25th.

The Quadratic meteor shower will perform however it will the 3rd-4th.



By Nhobgood Nick Hobgood

## Minimum Daily Requirements

Dru Clarke



Medical professionals recommend a daily dose of 1000 International Units of Vitamin D. Needed for strong bones and teeth. When I was a kid (in the 1940's) my mom ruined a perfectly good glass of fresh-squeezed orange juice by stirring in a tablespoon of cod liver oil. (I could have swallowed it separately, then chased it with the cleansing juice, but who argued with their mothers?) Cod, once an abundant marine fish found in shoals so thick that their backs would appear above the water and allow one to walk on them. Today, their population is only a shadow of their former fishy selves. It seems to me a good reason to let them be, to reproduce and swim about, and not harvest their livers for oil to nourish my bones. Or yours.

A walk in sunshine, allowing some skin to be exposed, should be enough to supply your minimum. Soluble in oil, it will be absorbed through the skin IF not washed off immediately. A good reason to get a bit dirty, maybe absorbing some phages, too, that fight bad 'bugs' (bacteria, viruses). Phages, though, are abundant in soupy, stagnant water, so you might have to wade (or swim!) to gather some. Sticking to dry terrain might be more to your liking. But maybe there is one lurking out there to counter the effects of long term Covid.

We can get from 2% to several thousand % of most vitamins and minerals in a multivitamin pill, but what fun is that when you can eat and drink nourishing and savory dishes and beverages. Like that holiday egg nog, laced with a good bourbon or rum? (Remembering the Moses' seasonal bourbon balls that got my husband through his UPS route). But what other minimum daily requirements exist that aren't consumable?

At our homestead, seeing a splash of red in the drab winter landscape counts as one: a cardinal or spray of coral berry. Or the fuchsia of wahoo fruit startlingly bright, a burst of color among dun and grey limbs. The blue-grey lichen clinging to the bark of one fallen limb, the orange of bittersweet vines all meet our need for relief from the dormancy of the winter season.

Watching a calf nurse for the first time, then, later seeing it befriend another, gaining independence from its dam. Encountering a doe and her nearly grown fawn, later to find her being courted by a ten-point buck who managed to survive the hunt. Flushing a covey of quail, those adorable birds, who had hunkered down on a seldom traveled parcel. Patting the good dog on the head for not chasing them. Spying one of the winter sparrow species on our feeder and trying to clearly identify it from the others.

Sharing our sights and finds with a few good friends whom we anticipate will appreciate them as well.

Enjoying that first cup of coffee, brewed from freshly ground beans, and talking in bed as we watch out the east window to see if the sun, indeed, will rise again, and being treated to a riot of spectral pastels before it finally slides over the horizon. And a kiss before bed, after standing on the deck to find some of Pete's finely described stars and planets.

These, too, are some of our minimum daily requirements. There may be more, but it is good to reflect on these, and wonder what yours might be too.

Peaceful season.

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## RENEW your support for the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society

Wishing all a Peaceful and Joyous New Year.

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The new year is a good time to think about how you can help our organization.

We need more people involved to make our organization grow and be the vibrant “bird-ing” organization most of us want.

This means encouraging engagement, inviting younger people to come, providing ideas that will enhance our organization.

What is it that is keeping you from being active in the NFHAS?

Please consider coming to a board meeting and helping - we need a Secretary.

Volunteering for committees:

**Program Committee**

**Education Committee**

**AOK representative**

**Sanctuaries**

**Bird Seed Sales**



*Please consider helping*

*Photo by Dave Rintoul*

## Names, Eponyms, Names, Eponymous

Jay Jeffrey



The fast, fierce, and deadly goshawk held the Latin specific epithet, *gentilis*; referring to “noble” or “gentle” because in the Middle Ages only the nobility were permitted to fly goshawks for falconry. However, this past July, the former Northern Goshawk, *Accipiter gentilis*, was split into two species by the American Ornithological Society (AOS, 64th Supplement): American Goshawk (*Accipiter atricapillus*) and the Eurasian Goshawk (retaining the former Latin name, *Accipiter gentilis*). The American Goshawk’s new specific epithet, *atricapillus*, now shares that descriptor with our jubilant Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*). And it’s fitting, because our proud and stunning adult goshawk also has a black-colored crown patch atop its head.

In early November of this year (less than two months ago), a notable bombshell arrived at the doorsteps of many birding and scientific communities: the AOS will begin renaming all birds that currently have eponymous English names, changing the names to be more descriptive and focused on unique features and/or beauty of each bird species. An eponym is the person, place, or thing that something else is named after. Some examples for birds: Wilson’s Phalarope, Swainson’s Thrush, Cassin’s Kingbird, Cooper’s Hawk, Say’s Phoebe. AOS is committed to this move, in part because of their commitment to eliminating bias in science, as well as, eliminating historic bias in how birds were named; particularly in light of today’s emphasis on inclusivity and rectifying harmful name associations with racism and misogyny.

So, who has the most bird species named after them? Although not English, it may indirectly be after one of the greatest explorers and navigators of all time. While Christopher Columbus is credited for discovering the new world, it was the Italian man named Amerigo Vespucci who recognized that it was a new world. And he is the eponym of America.

It’s rather ironic, given that this new historic AOS English bird-name project follows so closely after changing the name of Northern Goshawk to American Goshawk. Although I suppose it’s acceptable given it’s technically an eponymous Italian name, and possibly having such geographic specificity and significance that its eponymous-ness becomes insignificant. But maybe our American Goshawk might have been better descriptively named as Black-capped Goshawk? And another black-capped bird that could be considered a candidate for similar name change might be Wilson’s Warbler (one of 5 species named after Alexander Wilson, who died in 1813 aged 47, having just authored the 9-volume book set – American Ornithology).

To be sure, if the AOS English bird-name project wasn’t already controversial enough, changing all 22 bird names beginning with “American” would most certainly be! It’s that bold, patriotic, and stubborn American attitude many in this country are so known for...good and bad. Name associations, and all the politics, I will steer clear of. But naming fauna and flora for unique features and/or their beauty is something I can get totally behind. Now, where did I first see that stellar jay?

“...The Caspian Tern—big, noisy, and conspicuous—wasn’t recognized as occurring in North America until about 1850, because everyone had confused it with the Royal Tern. Insights like these await anyone who decides to learn about the history of our favorite science, and such learning is easier if you avoid the needless distraction of eponymous bird names.” – Kenn Kaufman, 12/03/23  
<http://www.kaufmanfieldguides.com/kenn-on-the-issues/eponymous-bird-names-and-the-history-of-ornithology>

Regarding conflicting 4-letter Alpha Codes, NOGO no longer...  
AMGO no longer:

“Another change involves the split of Northern Goshawk to Eurasian (EUGO) and American (AGOS) goshawks. So NOGO is now a no go, but why AGOS? Well, a tragic reality of our strict system is that some familiar codes sometimes have to change. In this case, we now have a conflict between the codes for American Goshawk and American Goldfinch, necessitating a change from the beloved AMGO to AGOL.” – Peter Pyle, 07/26/23  
<https://www.birdpop.org/pages/blogPost.php?id=112>

Personally, I’ll still use AMGO on my KS CBC notepads – it warms my heart. If I’m ever lucky enough to sight a goshawk on a CBC, I’ll use NOGO – it would warm my heart. Regardless, I typically refer to them as the almighty “GOS,” pronounced like hoss!



American Goshawk, Juvenile (left) and Adult (right).  
Image by Louis Agassiz Fuertes (artist, 1874-1927)



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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](http://nfhas.org)

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newsletter for \$20/yr.***

Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon  
Society and mail to: **Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932,  
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**WE NEED YOU!** PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

#### NFHAS Board

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