

Feb. 18th, at 3 p.m.
FLINT HILLS DISCOVERY
CENTER

The NFHAS, together with the The Flint Hills Discovery Center, presents a special program with author George Frazier.

"George Frazier takes you to some little known and underappreciated natural spots in Kansas. His heartfelt affection and evocative description will make you want to hit the road and experience these places for yourself."

*Rex Buchanan, Director of
 Kansas Geological Survey*

"This fine book seeks out remnants of unscripted natural loveliness within a state where the percentage of public land is scarcely 2 percent, from the shortgrass of the Cimarron desert to the sprawl of Johnson County. Natural and human history are layered here, layers of deposition that Frazier lovingly sifts through. Witty, determined, and generous with what he finds, Frazier reclaims the beauty of understated and forgotten. I love visiting these places with him."

*Elizabeth Dodd, author of
 "Horizon's Lens: My Time on the Turning World"*

There will also be a book signing.

So don't miss another opportunity to visit the Discovery Center.

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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 45, No. 6 ~ February 2017

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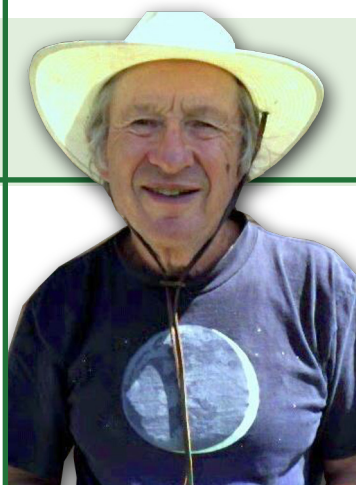
Upcoming Events

Feb. 6 - Board Meeting 6 p.m.
 Home of Tom & MJ Morgan

Feb. 11 - Birdseed Recipes - make your own
 2:00-4:00 p.m. (see page 5)
 5614 Bayers Hill Manhattan, KS (Lake Elbo)

Feb. 18 - George Fraser, author 3 p.m.
 Program and book signing The Flint Hills
 Discovery Center
 (see above)

Mar. 6 - Board Meeting 6 p.m.
 Home of Tom & MJ Morgan



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

One of the pleasanter pictographs that might describe February is that of someone reading beside a (controlled) fire.

One book that's come my way this winter has been unhurried in coming, being first published in 2010, so it's possible other folks are ahead of me. However, combining information from the United Nations' UNESCO arm and a couple commercial sources, I find there were over 300,000 titles published in the U.S. in 2013, down from a peak of over a million in 2007, and even though the bulk of these were re-prints and self-published works, it seems possible some people might have missed the one I'm about to reference.

Titled *The Disappearing Spoon* it uses the framework of the Periodic Table of the Elements that is displayed in schools and texts around the globe, to present a cornucopia of information about those elements, about the people who worked to discover and understand them, and about a broad range of effects the nature of those elements have had.

The mystery in the title is rather quickly and briefly revealed to be related to how the element Gallium can resemble Silver though having a melting point of 84°F, enabling pranksters to shape it into tablespoons that suddenly melt away into one's tea or soup.

Using a biographical approach the author, science writer Sam Kean, describes how through the recent centuries some enthused young scientists, some later famous, some overlooked, paid a price for searching out the properties of such things as Beryllium and Radium. And how corrosive in other ways has been the competition for recognition, especially for that holy grail, the Nobel Prize.

But such regrettables are only part of the 376 pages. For example, several pages are used to notice that in the ancient kingdom of Phrygia (now part of Turkey) Zinc was sometimes indistinguishably mixed with the ores of Tin that were mixed with Copper to form bronze. The subtle Zinc gave the bronze from that area the gold-like shine of brass, and since a king named Midas ruled that domain, Kean speculates that therein lies a root of the myth of a king who had a golden touch.

And as part of a consideration of the ways chemicals get their names one learns in passing that Etienne de Silhouette, an 18th century French minister of finance, in trying to pay for the Seven Years War, became such a pinch-penny that any cheap product, including mere dark shapes in place of a full portrait, became known as 'silhouettes'.

These are just the more easily cited parts of the whole. The main thrust of the book involves the atomic condition of the items in the Periodic Table, how in detail those conditions came to be within – and how they have influenced – cosmic bodies and earthly history and present conditions. This includes how they affect everything from livestock grazing to evaluating the great die-off of the dinosaur era to our own make-up and thought processes. We, and all about us, are in that way, exemplars of information expressed in that Table. (The book was originally published hardback by Little, Brown, 2010, and as a Back Bay paperback in 2011.)

This February starts off with Mars and Venus lined up on the evening of the 1st with the Moon in Pisces. Mars will be dim, while Venus will be bright enough to cast a shadow on its own. The bright star near the Moon on the 5th will be Aldebaran, Taurus' red eye.

Then, as StarDate points out, the evening of the 7th will feature a gathering of brightnesses, as a nearly full Moon will be in Gemini, with the stars Castor above Pollux to its left. Arranged in a counter clockwise circle below and to westward will be Procyon, the Little Dog's star, then to its right will be sparkling Sirius, the Big Dog's star and the brightest in the sky. Upward in the circle will be Saith, Orion's right (left to us) foot, then Rigel, his left foot, and bending back toward the Moon, will be Bellatrix, the left shoulder and huge, reddish Betelgeuse, the right shoulder.

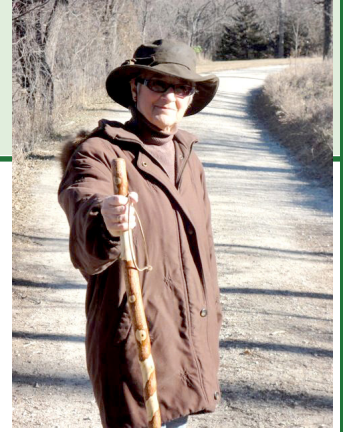
The Moon next passes by Leo's star, Regulus, the 10th and 11th, to move – after mid-evening – from above to below Jupiter as that planet keeps company with Virgo's Spica the 15th and 16th. Also on the 16th, and again on the 17th, Venus will at its brightest for this sequence of evening star appearances.

For the latter part of at the month Saturn rises ever earlier in the morning hours, sharing the pre-dawn stage with the Moon and Scorpius's reddish Antares the 19th-21th, letting Venus, Mars, and the Moon form another line to close out the month in the evening of the 28th. The Moon will be full the 10th at 6p33 and new the 26th at 8a58

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Traffic Cop

Dru Clarke



At the junction of Route 24 and the Flush Road, numerous vehicular accidents have taken the lives of half a dozen people. So much controversy erupted over this anomalous corner that the state of Kansas' Department of Transportation erected automated speed monitors and lowered the maximum speed to 60, the rest of the open road allowing 65 mph. But another (unintended or unpaid) deterrent watches the intersection: the children of USD 323 call it the "traffic cop." *

The red-tailed hawk's beat is this territory, and is seen each morning by the kids on the school bus that crosses the dangerous intersection. The island of grass between the four lanes is home to its typical prey: rodents. Our most common buteo (a raptor with long, broad wings, moderately long tail, and bare tarsi or feet), this adaptable bird is a benevolent friend to farm and home due to its usual diet, only rarely taking other wild birds, like quail. A mated pair stays with us each winter, patrolling the pastures north of us, one usually aloft while the other perches in the dead, but exceedingly tall, tree that grew on the bank of an ephemeral stream that becomes a flume after a downpour. Occasionally we see them side by side on one of the tree's branches and we wonder what forges their undeniable bond, their unfailing loyalty.

We think the traffic cop is unmated, for we never see another close by. But down the road to the west, about two miles away, a red-shouldered hawk has staked out its claim at a similar intersection, different in that a persistent wetland exists in a once-hoped-for crop field. In winter, a flock of gulls congregates in its middle, and the hawk haunts the island of the highway. In summer, red-shouldered hawks eat more frogs and snakes than small mammals, and some ornithologists (e.g. Leslie Brown, in his "Birds of Prey, Their Biology and Ecology") think they may be moving evolutionarily toward a more aquatic habitat. Visiting a friend who lives just up from this main road, I frightened a red-shouldered hawk out of her lilac bushes beneath which she had been feeding some wild cottontails. I'm not sure who was more startled. Evidently the transition to water is in flux.

We've often seen raptors descending on their prey, but because the act is so fast, we can't clearly see what really happens to seal the prey's fate. Through slow motion films of 800 to 1000 frames per second, with exposures of 1/3000 to 1/5000 second, G.E. Goslow could estimate the speed and position of the raptor and of its different limbs and how it used them. He discovered that all raptors delivered a blow in motion as well as crashing into the prey, by swinging the pelvis and feet forward faster than the

head and body are traveling.

The shock at impact depends upon the weight of the bird and the speed at which it or its feet are moving. A goshawk, 10 to 20 percent lighter than a red-tailed hawk, delivers a much more stunning blow because it is traveling three to four times faster. (Energy varies as the square of velocity, so a goshawk strikes ten times harder than a buteo of about the same weight.)

In past winters, we've been fortunate to catch glimpses of a goshawk hunched on a limb in a wooded thicket not far from an open meadow reclaimed from a quarry. Helen Macdonald, in her captivating book, "H is for Hawk" describes, in part, a female goshawk she is attempting to train: "...there's a strange grey tint to her that is felt, rather than seen, a kind of silvery light like a rainy sky reflected from the surface of a river." (p.82) Ours, wrong as it is to lay claim to a wild bird, is colored like this, but its eye is red- the mark of an adult bird- rather than having a "dandelion eye," as T.H. White's** young male was, and seeing it, we know what it is to be in awe. We never witnessed the one we saw in flight or in an attack on prey, nor would we want to be in its path when delivering a defensive blow (as they have been known to do). To our loss, it will have traveled north come spring.

So, the raptors patrol neighborhoods: the more common sharp-shinned and Cooper's, and rarer merlin, in woodlands and in our yards, gleaning from our feeders those that we've made dependent on us; the harriers maneuvering low over our grasslands and fallow fields; the kestrels from their favored perches on high wires; and our beloved and often under-appreciated red-tailed, keeping the peace, and enforcing the balance of kind, between woodland and prairie. May the beat go on.

*cop – the shortened form of 'copper' which, in Britain, meant "one who captures" - a fitting term for the hawk the children see from their bus

** T.H. White's description of the first goshawk he ineptly attempted to train, in his book of the experience "The Goshawk", was less flattering and lyrical.)

© Jan 2, 2017 Dru Clarke

NFHAS HISTORY -

Patricia Yeager

We are attempting to compile a complete list of officers since Northern Flint Hill Society's beginning in 1971. Our PF records go back to 1983 and thanks to Carla Bishop's efforts we have found these names since 1983:

Presidents:

1983-84 Sil Pembleton
1985-88 Duane Kerr
1989 Randy and Sue Kidd
1990 Jan Garton & Mike Rhodes
1991-92 Steve and Jane Amy
1993 Carla Bishop
1994 John Wesley
1995-96 Leann Harrell
1996-97 Carla Bishop and Hoogy Hoogheem
1998-2002 Hoogy Hoogheem
2003-2004 Carla Bishop
2005 Judy Roe
2006-2017 Patricia Yeager

Vice Presidents:

1983 Mike Eubanks
1984 Jan Garton
1986-87 Paul Weidhaas
1988 Ruth Welti
1989 Jan Garton
1990 Jane Withee
1991 Leann Harrell
1992 Carla Bishop
1993-2004 Dave Rintoul
1995 Dave Rintoul and Chris Cokinos
2005-07 Cindy Jeffrey
2008-17 MJ Morgan

Treasurers:

1983 Di Ann Roberts
1984 Paul Weidhaas
1985-88 Marge Muenzenberger
1989-1991 Carla Bishop
1992 Jane Amy
1993-94 Mary Barth Kleinkauf
1995-06 Jan Garton
2007-09 Carla Bishop
2010-11 Susan Pusker
2012-17 Carla Bishop

Secretaries:

1983-85 Jan Garton
1986-87 Leann Harrell
1988 Marry Freel
1989-92 Buddy Gray
1993-99 Margy Stewart
2000 Dolly Gudder
2001-03 Eloise Thomas
2006-07 MJ Morgan
2009-10 Annie Baker
2010-15 Donna Roper

Newsletter – Praire Falcon

Not sure who started the newsletter or when?

1990?- 1999 Dave Rintoul

2000 – 2017 Cindy Jeffrey

1970s: NEED HELP with 70s and 80s

Perry Conway 1971

Monty Henton

Dr. John Zimmerman

Dr. Steve Fretwell

Gary Ward

Laura Herod

Mike Wood

Dru Clarke

Kent Forester

Let us know of any corrections (especially spelling).

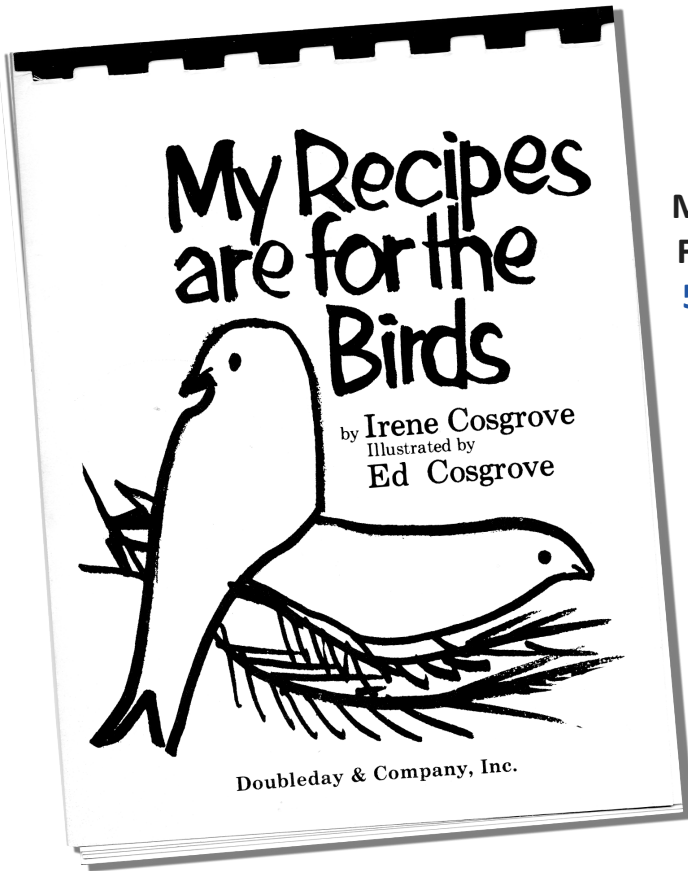
Also, names of anyone prior to this list (years are not as important but very helpful). Leave a note in the Northern Flint Hills Audubon website blog or leave a message on voice mail @ 785-776-9593 or send a letter to NFHAS History, [5614 Bayers Hill, Manhattan KS 66502](#).

Our best source of information is you, so please help us complete this list/history.

If anyone has information about the "SAVE OUR BOTTOMS" campaign and Jan Garton's role, please let us know. We would like to add to what there is at the visitor's center at Cheyenne Bottoms.

HOMEMADE Birdfeed

Patricia Yeager



Make recipes for the Birds.

Feb. 11 (Sat.) 2:00-4:00 p.m.

5614 Bayers Hill Manhattan, KS (Lake Elbo)

No Saturday Morning Birding this Feb. 11th. The second Saturday birding has proven too cold in February for the past several years so this year, instead of trying to bird outside, we will substitute an inside bird activity.

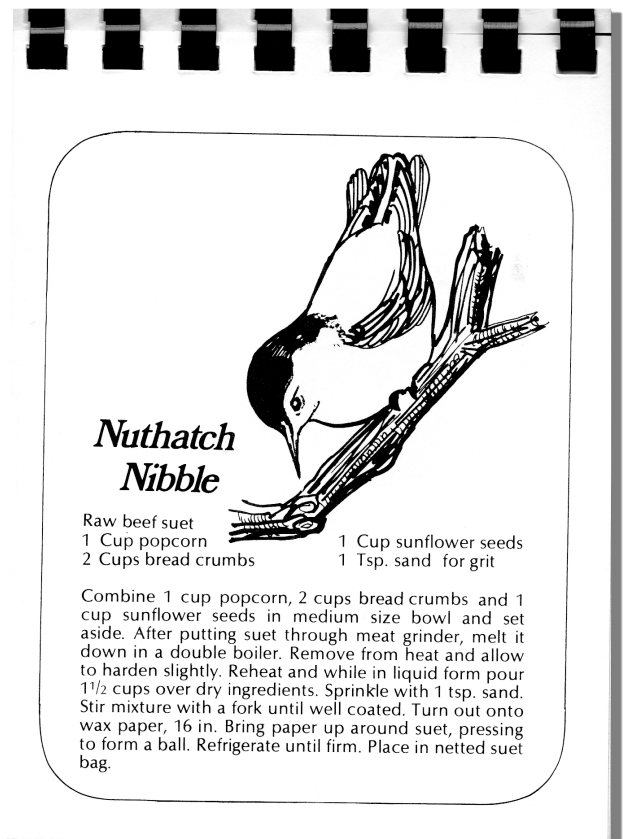
I came across a booklet Copyright 1976 by Irene and Ed Cosgrove entitled My Recipes are for the Birds. I will assemble all the ingredients and each person attending will have a recipe to put together.

You may get to make Junco Jubilee, Nuthatch Nibble, Woodpecker Wellington, Flicker Fricassee or one of the other fifteen recipes.

The more members that attend the more variety of bird foods we can share among ourselves.

Come and join the fun, take home some bird food, and enjoy watching my bird feeders from the living room. Please bring a mixing bowl with you that will hold 4 cups

Patricia Yeager



Another Christmas Bird Count

Cindy Jeffrey



Photo by Dave Rintoul

The Olsburg Christmas Bird Count was held Dec. 30, 2016. The count area is a circle 15 miles in diameter, with the center point 1.5 miles west at intersection of Highway 16 and Mariadahl Rd. We had seven observers (Gary Jeffrey, Carol Hoogheem, Cindy Jeffrey, Doris Burnett, Jay Jeffrey, Eric Millar and Sara Miller), divided up into three groups. The weather was beautiful – unlike the Manhattan Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 19th when there was snow, wind and freezing temperatures. This area is such a jewel! From high prairie hills to creeks, rivers, woodlands, marshes and the reservoir.

We met at noon at Loberg's for lunch, and then were off again until it became too dark, about 5:45 p.m. There were thousands of Common Mergansers and Mallards, a few Pintails, one Hooded Merganser, two Common Goldeneye and a Ruddy duck, a few Gadwall, 37 Green-winged Teal, and 270 Canada Geese. There were thousands of crows, not unusual, and 547 Red-winged Blackbirds. We saw two Northern Shrikes, and a Hermit Thrush. There were 16 adult and 18 immature Bald eagles, 44 Red-tailed Hawks, four American Kestrels, four Merlins, 14 Northern Harriers, six Sharp-shinned Hawks and one Cooper's Hawk. There were 11 Bobwhite, and 5 Wild Turkey and five Great Blue Herons spotted. 334 Ring-billed Gulls, and 16 Herring Gulls. Also, seen or heard on count day, were 2 Great Horned Owls, and one Barred Owl.

We counted 286 BlueJays, 21 Black-capped Chickadees, 11 Titmouse, 7 White-breasted Nuthatch, one Winter Wren, six Carolina Wren, 57 Eastern Bluebirds, one Hermit Thrush, 399 American Robin, 176 European Starling, 74 Cedar Waxwing, 29 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 65 American Tree Sparrows, 17 Song Sparrows, 3 Lincoln's Sparrows, 51 Harris' Sparrows, 16 White-crowned Sparrows, 284 Dark-eyed Juncos, 100 Longspurs, 29 Northern Cardinals, 547 Red-winged Blackbirds, 156 Meadowlarks, 11 House Finch, 139 American Goldfinch, 56 House Sparrows. Three Rock Pigeon, two Eurasian Collared Dove and 13 Morning Dove. There were two Belted Kingfishers, 17 Red-bellied Woodpeckers, six Downy and one Hairy Woodpeckers, 27 Northern Flickers (and 13 Yellow-shafted flickers

I think the Olsburg CBC started in 1990 according to the records we received from Dave Rintoul. That first year, Dec. 20, 1990, had five observers: Melissa Brown, Gary Radke, Dave Rintoul, Paul Weidhaas and John Zimmerman. They saw 53 species, with average temperature 10 degrees, light snow and overcast. In 1991, there were 20 observers (the largest group of observers to date) – Deb Beutler, Melissa Brown, Doris Burnett, Eric Cable, Ted Cable, Brock Dale, Buddy Gray, Chod Hedinger, Jay Jeffrey, Duane Kerr, Sam Lacy, Jim Mayhew and Gary Radke, Amy Rintoul, David Rintoul, Chris Smith, Guy Smith, Barbara Stevens and Paul Weidhaas. This group saw 65 species on Dec. 21, 1991- 20-40 degrees and sunny.

There has been a count every year since with as few as five to as many as 20 observers. It is a wonderful area of the country, beautiful no matter what the weather. Think about adding this count to your list next year.

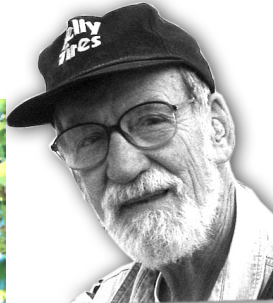
Looking back on 2016



Carnahan Creek Park-
Bluebird Trail
Greg Wurst takes over
the care of this Trail.



A pair of nesting Mississippi Kites
near Keats- Jacque Staats



Another successful
BIRDATHON- THANKS to
Clyde Ferguson!



Dave Rintoul captured this wonderful
photo of the Lewis Woodpecker that was
a special visitor to Manhattan Kansas this
year.



ONGOING PROJECTS
Northeast Park Prairie burned and renewed

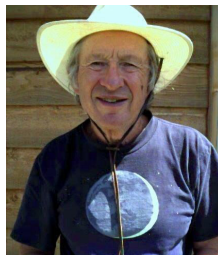
Butterfly Garden rehabilitation project

Alsop Property- progressing!

ONGOING PF CONTRIBUTORS



Dru Clarke



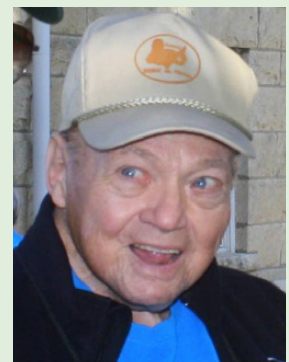
Pete Cohen



Quivira National Wildlife Refuge & Cheyenne Bottoms Field Trip



We will always remember
Hoogy Hooghem





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U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 662
Manhattan, KS 66502

Return Service Requested

Published monthly (except August) by the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.
Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520. (cinraney@ksu.edu)
Also available on-line at www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html

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. Website is 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> and join in the discussions.

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