

63rd Manhattan Christmas Bird Count Dec. 17, 2011

Group Leaders:

(see page 4 for more information)

Dave Rintoul 532-6615

Clyde Ferguson 539-4856

Jack Cully 532-6534

Hoogy Hoogheem 539-7080

Doris Burnett 537-2502

Brett Sandercock 532-0120

Manhattan CBC Compilation Dinner Chili Supper Join the NFHAS and fellow birders for a potluck supper at 6 p.m., Dec. 17, at the Seniors Service Center, 412 Leavenworth, Manhattan.
Carla Bishop, 539-5129 or 532-1858 or email: cbishop@ksu.edu

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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 40, No. 4 ~ December 2011

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Upcoming Events

Dec 5 - Board Mtg. 6:00 p.m.
home of Tom & MJ Morgan

Dec 10- Sat. Morning Birding 8 a.m.
Meet at Sojourner Truth Park

Dec 16 - CBC - Olsburg (gjeffrey@twinvalley.net)
Dec 17 - CBC - Manhattan (see above & pg. 4)
Dec 18 - CBC - Wakefield (otte2@cox.net)
Dec 26 - CBC - Junction City (otte2@cox.net)

Dec 26- BIRD SEED ORDER deadline

Jan 7 - BIRD SEED PICKUP UFM

Jan 8 - Eagle Days, Tuttle Creek Lake



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

Another winter solstice approaches and few are those, I think, who will interrupt their daily activities and cares to engage in some rite in a serious effort to keep the Sun from continuing south, leaving behind eternal darkness, swiftly preceded by frigidity and famine. And I wonder how many members of ancient societies that did engage asked, “Why bother? It’s always come up. It’ll come up again.” And I wonder if they were treated like Galileo and others who have thought differently.

Right after WWII, when fear spread about an atomic bomb attack and there was a boom in the sales of personal and family bomb shelters, I don’t recall any friction between those who bought and those who did not.

Financial worries are holding center stage as I write but I note that in the wings there are those who can offer other causes for diverting concern. There are those who speak in differing voices of the exhaustions of our energy sources and of our usable water. There are the possibilities of pathogens mutating to feast devastatingly on the shrinking diversity of our food crops and/or to escape the versatility of our medical responses. Add to that climate change, plus the unnumbered supply of asteroids, a couple of which, I’ve read, have recently passed within half the distance to the Moon without our knowing till they were past.

And for extras, there’s Yellowstone Park, much of which is a super caldera, the collapsed remains of the last three of a series of volcanoes whose home fires are obviously still burning. With a cat’s curiosity I learn that the twenty-plus previous explosions began when a large bubble of hot magma got near the surface of an area we now call the Nevada-Oregon border. As the hotspot

continued to birth eruptions, tectonics moved the surface gradually westward so that repeating residues produced what we now call the potato heaven of Idaho’s Snake River plain. As what we call Wyoming slid over that hot spot, evidence indicates that one of the eruptions there blew away tens of miles of a neighboring mountain range. Neither Rice Krispies or bubble-gum can compete with that.

At the moment there’s an active bulge in the park, changing by a measure of various inches per year. Yellowstone Lake is being tilted so that its southern shore is getting marshy while drying areas appear oppositely. All the past eruptions have been unevenly spaced but apparently the interims average out to 600,000 years, and the last one is figured to have been just about that long ago. Some sources I’ve found say nothing imminent; others say, “Who knows?”

If and when it blows again, the Moon might be the safest place from which to view it. But be advised that the Moon will be eclipsed on the 10th, totally as viewed from Alaska and Hawaii, partially hereabouts, starting, *StarDate* informs, at 6p46. But it will rebound to upstage all but the brightest Geminid meteors on the night of the 13th. Meanwhile, Venus will be brightly setting during the early darkneses, leaving Jupiter, who will be high up at sundown, to brightly follow her down in the wee hours. And as the planets are doing their setting acts, Lyra’s star, Vega, the bright blue eye of summer, will be lingering ever lower toward 11 p.m. in the northwest with the long cross of Cygnus the Swan just above it. To eastward, they will be separated by the dimnesses of Pegasus and Andromeda from the glittering rising winter corps of Taurus’s red Aldebaran, Canis Major’s brilliant Sirius, while Castor and Pollux, the twin stars Gemini, help form a broad U with all of Orion shining in the middle.

The Moon will be full for eclipse on the 10th at 8p36, and new at 12p06 the 24th.

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Caliche Creek

Dru Clarke

The calves in our horse corral didn't belong there. Following their droppings up the now dry creek bed that wound through the oak woodland, the dogs and I found where they had come through: an earlier season's rain had poured into the twisting channel and tore the fence from its moorings, tossing it like flotsam onto the north bank. The log that had anchored the bottom wire was beached like driftwood, draped with contorted strands of wire, grass, and detritus flushed from upstream. The calves had merely walked in.

Tufts of debris caught on branches four feet above the creek bed were testimony to the height and fury of that creek after a storm. (The swift water could have bent and bowed these same branches, so it is possible that the water was not so high, but still powerful.) Now its bed was dry, except for the occasional pool scoured by the abrasion of past waterborne loads.

The creek bed is littered with fractured limestone, from coarse gravel to slabs tricked out with worm tunnels, concretions of plankton skeletons (*forams*) that resemble rice grains, and impressions of ancient shells. It also has chunks of caliche, an unusual mineral deposit formed in arid climates: it is common on the surface of the pasture which is part of the watershed of this creek. So, since it has no officially designated name, I call it Caliche Creek, which I think is kind of catchy and, somehow, appropriate.

How old this creek channel is I don't know, but conventional teaching is that old *river* channels meander: so does this creek. (It seems, however, that any ribbon of water, a rivulet through a prairie or a river through a valley, will bend when it encounters a barrier, be it a blade of grass or a boulder.) In less than a quarter of a mile, I count five distinctive curves.

On the outer curve of one meander, where the velocity of the water is greater, a straight and noble oak clings to a high bank, its streamside roots gnarled and suspended in space, supported by no more than air and

each other. Another tree on the opposite bank, above a silt bar more than likely created by soil shaved from the other side of the meander, was jaggedly broken, the bark on its stump shredded to long, thin strips by some sharp-clawed animal. A pool just beyond was a place for raccoons and deer to drink, the mud on its edge pocked by their prints.



The banks in summer are a thicket of shrubs, vines and forbs. Now coral berry shows off its bright fruits, while snakeroot floats like foam in the understory. Reed canary grass is now a yellowing dense tangle of blades and stems, a blonde mane streamside. Virginia creeper bursts in crimson surprise high in the trees, its bruise-colored berries hard to see from the ground. The trees are mixed deciduous, but because of the rocky slope on one side, chinquapin oaks dominate. Red-bellied woodpeckers and blue jays frequent the woods, and we both heard and saw them today. I climb the lower bank and find a well-worn trail, paralleling the creek bed, where the raccoons and deer, and probably bobcats, historically have traveled.

The oaks had dropped their leaves—blown and stacked like pages from a riffled book—and acorns, and our Chesapeake Bay retriever, just as happy out of water as in, deliberately scouted the creek bed for these crunchy morsels. A week ago, when I couldn't find the mares, I finally discovered them in this woodland gleaning the floor for chinquapin fare. As a result, their coats are glossy and their bellies round.

No live water (spring-fed or seep-fed) keeps Caliche Creek running; it is replenished only by the occasional rainstorm or snowmelt. So, it is classified as *intermittent*, not *perennial*, although it must have had a long life. (An *ephemeral* stream forms only during a precipitation event, then disappears.)

The calves are finally back where they belong, and the fence over the creek has been mended. The water that flowed in Caliche Creek that ruptured our fence and let in some curious calves is somewhere out there, in the Gulf or in a cloud, in a yazoo stream or Old Muddy, and will return somehow, someday. And we'll enjoy it then as well.

©2011 Dru Clarke

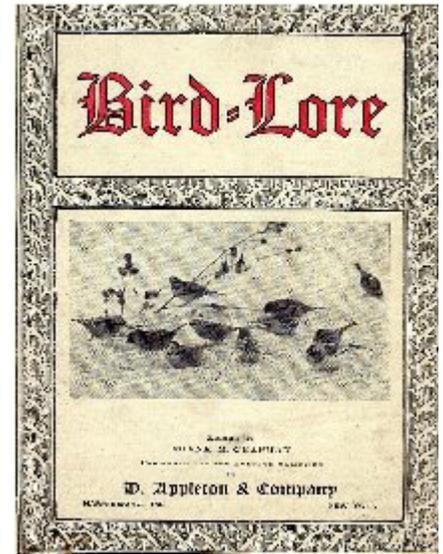
Christmas Bird Count

Ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, Editor of Bird-Lore, the "official organ of the Audubon Societies," revived and revamped a quintessential American frontier tradition, the 'side-hunt', and launched a new millennium for bird conservation, "that ornithological millennium when the value of birds to man will be common knowledge."

The December 1900 issue of Bird-Lore (Volume 2, Number 6) carried Chapman's proposal to a growing readership of popular conservationists, particularly women.

The historical results of over 100 years of the Christmas Bird Count can be viewed at <http://web4.audubon.org/bird/cbc/biblio.html>. Audubon is constantly assessing and improving the quality of the CBC database and aspires to maintain the highest data integrity possible given current ornithological thinking.

The first Christmas Bird Count was held Christmas Day 1900 by 27 participants in 25 locations throughout North America. 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 a total of 90 species on all the counts combined. A list from that first CBC can be found at <http://web4.audubon.org/bird/cbc/history.html> Today, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (the CBC) is the largest and longest-running wildlife census, ever.



63rd Manhattan Christmas Bird Count Dec. 17, 2011



Call a group leader at the numbers listed at below. If you can't make up your mind, ask **Dave Rintoul at 532-6615 or drintoul@ksu.edu** and he will try to get you hooked up with a group. The count commences at dawn and ends at dusk (unless you are part of a group counting owls).

Manhattan CBC Compilation Dinner - Join the NFHAS and fellow birders for a potluck supper at 6 p.m., Dec. 17, at the Seniors Service Center, 412 Leavenworth, Manhattan. Feel free to bring a dish to share. Free-will donations to NFHAS are 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 want to help setup, please call **Carla Bishop, 539-5129 or 532-1858 or email: cbishop@ksu.edu**

Dave Rintoul 532-6615
Clyde Ferguson 539-4856
Jack Cully 532-6534
Hoogy Hoogheem 539-7080
Doris Burnett 537-2502
Brett Sandercocok 532-0120

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society

2011-2012 Bird Seed Fundraiser

Orders Due:
December 26

Return with payment to:
NFHAS % Annie Baker
P.O. Box 1932
Manhattan, KS 66505-1932

Thank you for your order & support!

Checks payable to:
Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, or (NFHAS)

Bird Seed Descriptions:

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEEDS are the preferred seed of many small feeder birds and attractive to more species than are striped sunflower seeds. Black oil supplies more energy per pound than striped.

STRIPED SUNFLOWER SEEDS contain larger hearts than black oil sunflower seeds and are particularly suitable for larger songbirds.

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED CHIPS are high in energy and can be used in tube feeders. It is especially liked by Pine Siskins. Hulled sunflower seed is consumed by a variety of birds, large- and small-beaked.

MILLET White millet is a favorite of most small-beaked ground-feeding birds; Red millet is also readily eaten. Quail, doves, juncos, sparrows, towhees, cowbirds, and red-winged blackbirds are attracted to millet.

CORN CHOP, or cracked corn kernels, like millet, is attractive to a variety of birds, especially ground-feeders. It also attracts crows, starlings, doves and squirrels.

THISTLE SEED is very attractive to Gold Finches and all other finches that are here over winter. It is excellent for tube feeders.

SAFFLOWER is a favorite with Cardinals, and squirrels really do not like it.

PEANUT PICKOUTS are chunks of peanut hearts and are very attractive to woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, titmice, jays, wrens, and more.

FLINT HILLS FEAST is the premium seed mix: 50% striped sunflower seed, and 50% white proso millet (with no milo or fillers).

CHEAP CHEEP MIX is less expensive but still attractive to many species. It is 40 % cracked corn, 40 % white proso millet, and 20 % striped sunflower (with no milo or fillers).

REGULAR FORMULA FINCH MIX consists of 50% sunflower chips and 50% thistle seed. This is very popular with most tube feeding species.

SUET CAKES, in addition to having other nutritious ingredients, the main ingredient, high calorie beef fat, helps birds maintain body heat in cold winter months. Bird seed, berries and peanut butter are mixed in with suet. Enjoy woodpeckers, wrens, nuthatches, and chickadees.

(Taken from Audubon At Home Bird Feeding Basics, http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_feeding/index.html)

Sales Support Local Chapter Activities	Quality Seed, Easy Handling
As with all of our fund-raising activities, proceeds from our seed sales go toward supporting the educational and conservation projects of the local chapter. All of our labor is voluntary. Taxes are included in the price of our seed. Even though we are a not-for-profit organization, we are required to pay tax on any retail sales. Any additional donation you may wish to include with your order is appreciated.	The products we offer are high quality seeds. Our mixes were created to satisfy the needs of local bird populations at reasonable costs. We have tried to make it easy for you to purchase the amount of seed you want without having to handle heavy, awkward bags. Our seed comes in 10, 25, and 50 pound bags. We try to obtain the seed in paper bags whenever possible.

2011-2012 Bird Seed Fundraiser

Pick Up:
January 7

Location:
Saturdays, **8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**
UFM, 1221 Thurston, Manhattan

Volunteers welcome! Help unload the delivery truck at 7:45 a.m., or volunteer throughout the morning. Contact Annie Baker, bunny@ksu.edu, (785) 375-4633.

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society

Description	Size	Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
Flint Hills Feast mix	10 lb	\$9.20		
	25 lb	\$20.00		
	50 lb	\$34.00		
Cheap Cheep mix	10 lb	\$8.20		
	25 lb	\$16.50		
	50 lb	\$29.60		
Black Oil Sunflower	10 lb	\$12.00		
	25 lb	\$25.00		
	50 lb	\$43.00		
Striped Sunflower	10 lb	\$12.90		
	25 lb	\$26.20		
	50 lb	\$44.90		
Black Oil Sunflower Chips	10 lb	\$22.10		
	25 lb	\$40.20		
Regular Finch Mix	10 lb	\$19.30		
	25 lb	\$35.60		
Niger Thistle	10 lb	\$17.50		
	25 lb	\$32.50		
Safflower	10 lb	\$13.80		
	25 lb	\$30.50		
Peanut Pick-outs	10 lb	\$20.30		
	25 lb	\$31.00		
Corn on the Cob	10 lb	\$7.30		
	25 lb	\$13.00		
Medium Corn Chop	25 lb	\$16.50		
White Millet	10 lb	\$6.40		
	25 lb	\$12.20		
Red Millet	10 lb	\$7.30		
	25 lb	\$15.70		
Suet Cakes	High Energy	\$1.00		
	Peanut Butter	\$1.00		
	Berry	\$1.00		

(COMPLETE this portion and return with payment.)

Delivery service available – Manhattan city limits – Please include add'l \$5.

		SUBTOTAL:	
Name:		DELIVERY:	
Address:		DONATION:	
Phone:	Email:	TOTAL:	

Smart Disposal:

A few small steps can make an important difference in safeguarding lives and protecting the environment. Follow your medication prescriber's instructions and use all medications as instructed. If you do not use all of your prescribed or over-the-counter medication, you can take a few small steps to make a huge impact in safeguarding lives and protecting the environment by disposing of unused medicines properly:

Go to <http://www.smarxtdisposal.net/index.html>

Bird-friendly California vineyards may have fewer pests.

Insectivorous cavity-nesting birds can be encouraged to occupy vineyards by giving them nest boxes. New research documents that these birds reciprocate by providing significant eco-friendly pest control services to winegrape growers.

Go to <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/punctuated-equilibrium/2011/>

42nd Annual

Rivers & Wildlife Celebration March 15-18, 2012

Gather with wildlife enthusiasts from around the world to celebrate the annual migration of 500,000 sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl through the heart of the Central Flyway. The Rivers and Wildlife Celebration is Nebraska's crane festival and the nation's longest running wildlife festival.

REGISTRATION OPENS IN JANUARY For crane viewing information, contact Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, 308-468-5282 or rowesanctuary.org. Looking for other things to do during your stay? Visit nebraskaflyway.com for help planning your visit. Check our website nebraskacranefestival.org often for updates, because the agenda is still shaping up. Here are a few highlights of what we have planned for the 2012 Celebration:

- Saturday night keynote address by award-winning wildlife photographer Michael Forsberg
- Saturday lunch keynote address by humorist and storyteller Al Batt

EAGLE Days: Tuttle Creek Lake, January 8, 2012



nfhas.org

Upcoming Events

Prairie Falcon and more...

Website Blog - add your sightings, book reviews, suggestions.

Bird Seed Deadlines

Orders Due:
December 26

Pick Up:
January 7



Northern Flint Hills
Audubon Society
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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, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership renewals are also handled by the National Audubon Society. 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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