



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Australia: The Wildlife Down Under ROGER BOYD

February 9, 2020

3 pm - Grosbeck Room, Manhattan Public Library

1:00 - Lunch with the speaker at a El Patron

Australia is nearly as large as the continental US making it difficult to visit a representative sample of the country. On their 29-day tour Roger and Jan Boyd visited the west, east, and south coasts with a short extension to Tasmania. Although difficult to sum up in a few words, Australia is the land of parrots and kangaroos. Both were seen everywhere and in a wide variety of shapes, colors, and life styles from small Swift Parrots to the enormous Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo and from the rabbit-sized Red-necked Pademelon to the 6 ft. tall Red Kangaroo. Like the US, Australia is a land of contrasts and Roger's presentation will give us a taste of Australia's astonishing variety.

Roger Boyd received a BS degree from Baker University, a MS from Emporia State University, and a Ph.D. from Colorado State University before returning to Baker University to teach biology, be department chair, and director of the Baker Wetlands. He recently retired as Professor Emeritus of Biology after 42 years of service. Roger researched Least Terns and Piping Plovers along the Kansas River for the US Army Corps of Engineers for many years. He also surveyed Least Terns and Snowy Plovers at Cheyenne Bottoms, Quivira NWR, and the Cimarron River for several decades. More recently he was involved with development and implementation of the mitigation plan for the K-10 project around Lawrence which expanded the wetlands by 410 acres and provided over 11 miles of trails and the Discovery Center for Baker students and the public to better enjoy and experience the wetlands. With his wife Jan, Roger has organized and led over 25 natural history tours to the tropics for the benefit of students and adults alike. They have traveled to 21 countries and 6 continents in the past 30 years. Roger has served on the JAS Board various times since 1978.



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. 4- Eagle Days, Tuttle Creek Corps of Engineers begins at the fire station located on the corner of Denison and Kimball Avenues

Jan. 7- Board Meeting- 6:30 pm,
Manhattan Public Library

Feb. 3- Board Meeting- 6:30 pm,
Manhattan Public Library

Feb. 9- Australia: The Wild Life Down Under
Roger Boyd. See above.



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

As mentioned here last year, the Romans arranged for their year to begin with a month named “January”, derived from the Latin word. iannus, meaning a ‘gate’, something that faces forward and backward. Last January we glanced backward, inspired by the recent elections at the progress of women in achieving public office. Noting that while the first Congressional proposal for woman suffrage was offered in 1878, and eight western states began granting same through the late 1800s, it wasn’t installed nationally until ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920. After which Nellie Tayloe Ross and Marian “Ma” Ferguson became governors of Wyoming and Texas, respectively, in 1925, and in 1932 Hattie Carraway became a U.S. senator

from Arkansas—all three by fulfilling the terms of deceased husbands, with Carraway later becoming the first woman elected to the Senate. Yet before that, Jeanette Rankin, on her own, in 1916, had become the first woman elected to Congress, as a representative of Montana. She was elected again in 1940, thus having the opportunity to vote against the entry of the U.S. into both WWI and WWII, the first time as one of fifty, the second time standing alone, unable to cast a vote for war.

Looking backward now I note that on New Year’s Day 1502 Portuguese explorers came upon what is now the Rio de Janeiro. On the same date in 1892 Ellis Island in New York Harbor began processing the first of 20 million immigrants it would receive before being closed in 1954. On January 23, 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman in the U.S. awarded a degree in medicine, and on January 11, 1964 the U.S. surgeon-general declared cigarettes to be officially hazardous to health. On January 29, 1884, Karl Benz was awarded patent number 37435 for a wagon propelled by an internal combustion engine, and on January 25, 1959, the first transcontinental flight was operated from Los Angeles to New York City.

Looking forward provides a variety of topics, too. One can speculate for example on how many generations to come will the words ‘Oz’, ‘the yellow brick road’, and ‘we’re no longer in Kansas’ be commonly recognized. You can be helped in this by a 2018 book by three University of Wyoming professors, that contemplates what has followed L. Frank Baum’s *The Wizard of Oz* publication in 1900 “solely to please the children of today”—from its unsought popularity through the marketing of many derivative compositions, to the current musical, *Wicked*. The book’s full title is *The Road to Wicked: The Marketing and Consumption of Oz from L. Frank Baum to Broadway* by Aronstein, Drummond, and Rittenburg.

In parallel, one can wonder what are the probabilities of West Side Story no longer being described as ‘a re-telling of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*’. Does Oz have no antecedents? Other philosophies and discoveries aside, do these particular works of Shakespeare and Baum represent the “fundamental things of life, as time goes by”? Do you recall the movie *Casablanca*, and if so, why?

Or in another forward direction you can contemplate the discovery reported in the November 2nd *Economist* that an algae-rich compound, bromoform, prevents an enzyme in cattle and sheep from producing and emitting methane, 28 times more powerful a greenhouse gas than CO₂. Bromoform exists in a seaweed, *Asparagopsis*, and “experiments have shown that dairy cows eating a diet containing 1% *Asparagopsis* produce only a third the methane” than otherwise, and beef cattle apply the energy not given to methane production into faster growth. There are a meaningful number of sheep and cattle., and cow, it is said emits equally with an automobile. New Zealand is providing funds for people willing to try growing *Asparagopsis*, Will that, or injecting bromoform into other feed prove feasible, regulate-able, and not be perceived as an adulteration? Look ahead.

Meanwhile for getting close to certainty, look up. Barring some cosmic interruption, the timing and positions of the stars and planets will be dependable. The word for 2020 is that while there will be a lot of planetary action coming up, the year begins modestly in this regard, with Venus dominating as the evening star.

Reddish Mars appears dimly in the pre-dawn hours and gradually passes above the reddish star, Antares, as it moves from Libra into Scorpius, becoming high enough to form a triangle with Antares and the Moon the 20th. Jupiter, which will be traveling overhead during the daytime, will be seen setting in the evening twilight.

Actually, I think the main show in January is comprised of the brilliant winter constellations shining through the generally clearer winter air, but there’s always the possibility of the Quadrantic meteor shower providing extra entertainment the evening of the 3rd into the morning of the 4th. It can be seen only from the northern hemisphere, and is named for a quadrantic muralis, an early instrument for observing stars as they would reach the meridian, i.e. the highest point of their night’s passage. Recognition of such a constellation became abandoned as its namesake became obsolete. It was located close to the end of the Big Dipper’s handle in the direction toward the bright star Arcturus.

The Big Dipper begins January evenings close to the horizon then moves in an upward-starting counter clockwise semi circle, and the origin area of the Quadrantid meteor show should generally follow, generally appearing high in the sky, offering the most in the mid wee hours. They’re not dependable, though at times have produced 50 to 100 streaks an hour. So a gibbous Moon will obligingly set prior to that optimum time, just in case.

The Moon will be full the 10th at 1p21 and new the 24th at 3p42.

Old Growth

Dru Clarke



"What would you like to see?" Andy and Larisa asked me as we sat at their tiny kitchen table on the fourth floor of their Soviet-style apartment building. It was late January in Voronezh, Russia, and sloppy, slushy snow, sounding in Russian like 'schlaget', covered the streets, roofs, and courtyards. A slab of beef – it resembled beef- hung outside the smeared window on the balcony. Their daughter had already given up her room to me, so I felt embarrassed to ask for anything more from them. "Well, I'm really interested in nature and would love to see some forest if there is some nearby." We were in the middle of a dreary city peopled by folks walking everywhere, bundled head to toe in fur hats, long coats, and boots, their heads down to block the chill air.

The next day at an early hour Andy walked nearly a mile to get their Lada (parking was scarce) and we drove out of the city into the countryside. At first I thought we were passing a tree farm: trees grew in long rows, perfectly distanced from one another. They seemed odd, until I discovered why they appeared so regimented. The Russians during World War II burned the existing forest to prevent the encroaching Germans from harvesting the trees for fuel and military needs. Stalin, before he died, decreed that the lost forests should be replanted. Another hour passed and finally Andy stopped the car on what seemed a narrow lane, snowdrifts banking the edges of a deep and ancient forest. I got out and began to walk, glad for my boots but oblivious to the cold. The air was so still that sound fell away. No one spoke or had the need to: the quiet was palpable. As I walked among the huge trunks, I kicked snow from the ground cover, seeing green leaves of unfamiliar plants and wondered what they sustained. The trees were deciduous and had shed their leaves, but they stood with such regal bearing that I felt nothing but awe at their survival. The war had turned before these, too, were destroyed.

Old growth forests are uncommon, even rare. Our Appalachian forests seem original but they, too, are young climax communities, having been harvested centuries ago. Europe has remnants of old growth that used to cover the continent: a large protected expanse today is Bialowieza, a primeval forest in Poland and Belarus where European bison, miraculously saved from near extinction, roam. (It is ironic that the Nazi Himmler was partially responsible for the salvation of this forest as he wanted it for a private hunting preserve.) Even the heath moors in the highlands of the British Isles were once tree-covered, summarily altered by non-native sheep who graze, it seems, everywhere.* Governments are beginning to realize that protecting the fragments and restoring past stands are not only environmentally desirable but economically beneficial, especially for ecotourism.

I remember a forester my family consulted to assess the trees on our summer place in the highlands of New Jersey. Some of my favorites – old, gnarled, misshapen, derisively termed 'wolf trees' – were deemed 'unworthy' of living and were marked for removal. Evidently, he hadn't read or understood the tenets of Aldo Leopold's writings, himself a forester who realized the intricacies of ecosystems. My family merely filed the advice.



massive limbs. Not one child knew of its past and may not have been aware of its age, but it was *present* to them, and a present, I thought, for them. If dictators and criminals can reseed and protect trees and forests, we can as well.

We have a small tract of woodland, a chinquapin gallery, on an ephemeral stream on our land. The boles of the trees swell upward along the channel and the slopes, ending in surrounding grassland, the community that identifies our Flint Hills. But these trees provide something different. The branches, thick as the trunks, form Gothic arches overhead. It is eerily cathedral-like, perhaps not Notre Dame, but close and accessible. It asks the congregant to behave humbly, respectfully in its sanctuary, and that is what it feels right to do, so it is not hard to comply. Even the horses who have found the trove of fallen acorns are silent here.

Solitary old trees, many hidden away in neglected and largely forgotten margins of our worked ground, once found again, are often cherished and protected by private landowners. One grand old patriarch oak near the railroad tracks in St. George is over 262 years old. Waiting there for the 4014 Big Boy steam locomotive to pass through, I watched a gaggle of small children playing around the tree, wielding dry sticks that had fallen from its

Dru Clarke, Nov. 25, 2019

*Monbiot, George. "Feral. Rewilding the Land, the Sea, and Human Life. University of Chicago Press. 2014

71st Annual Manhattan Christmas Bird Count (CBC) SUMMARY MARK MAYFIELD

The Manhattan CBC was held on Saturday, December 14. A total of 40 field participants and 7 feeder watching participants took part in the 71st annual count. A total of 89 species and 34431 individuals were observed on count day with an additional 7 species recorded during count week. In general, bird numbers and diversity were pretty normal despite rumors to the contrary. The species total was just below the 10-year median of 95 species but was accomplished with a comparatively small group of people (10 yr. median 63 individuals). Among the species recorded, perhaps the most unusual was the White-winged Scoter, which has been hanging on the north side of the Tuttle Dam since early December (at least). A group of 9 White Pelicans remained on the river pond for an unusual Christmas count record as well. Other unusual, but not unexpected birds, included: 2 Great-tailed Grackle and a Brown Thrasher. Our most unexpected misses on count day included Bobwhite (cw=count week), Rough-legged Hawk, Prairie Falcon (cw), Screech Owl, Horned Lark and Purple Finch (cw). The last year a Bobwhite was not seen on a count was 1961 and it is only the 5th year it has not been seen on count day. Horned Larks are normally present and have been reported in the area over the last month (where were they?).

Thanks to all who participated for making this count a successful one, and especially for the excellent chili supper provided by Northern Flint Hills Audubon members and others who brought side dishes and desserts. I look forward to next year when we can do this again!

Greater White-fronted Goose	20	American Kestrel	19
Snow Goose (Total)	10105	Merlin	4
Ross's Goose	3	Prairie Falcon	cw
Cackling Goose	107	American Coot	1
Canada Goose	4437	Killdeer	3
Cackling/Canada	2	Wilson's Snipe	cw
Trumpeter Swan	cw	Ring-billed Gull	29
Gadwall	12	Herring Gull	3
Mallard	237	Rock Pigeon	316
Northern Shoveler	4	Eurasian Collared-Dove	48
Northern Pintail	4	Mourning Dove	163
Green-winged Teal	51	Great Horned Owl	2
Redhead	2	Barred Owl	5
Ring-necked Duck	2	Belted Kingfisher	12
Lesser Scaup	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	25
White-winged Scoter	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker	90
Bufflehead	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2
Common Goldeneye	71	Downy Woodpecker	61
Hooded Merganser	5	Hairy Woodpecker	10
Common Merganser	1	Northern Flicker (total)	144
Wild Turkey	155	Pileated Woodpecker	7
Northern Bobwhite	cw	Blue Jay	182
Pied-billed Grebe	5	American Crow	2190
American White Pelican	9	Black-capped Chickadee	136
Double-crested Cormorant	141	Tufted Titmouse	57
Great Blue Heron	33	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1
Bald Eagle (Total)	87	White-breasted Nuthatch	29
Northern Harrier	10	Brown Creeper	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Winter Wren	3
Cooper's Hawk	10	Carolina Wren	45
Red-shouldered Hawk	4	Bewick's Wren	cw
Red-tailed Hawk (TOTAL)	101	Golden-crowned Kinglet	8

The Merlin - *Falco columbarius*,
beautiful, built for speed and agility like all falcons.



Falcon vs. Hawk: Falcons are very fast in flight especially the peregrine falcon, whereas hawks are much slower in flight and would basically just glide on a descent. Falcons have a notch on their beaks while hawks have a simple curve on the beak. Falcons grab their prey with the beaks while hawks use talons on the feet to kill prey.

Manhattan CBC Summary continued:

Ruby-crowned Kinglet	7	Harris' Sparrow	305
Eastern Bluebird	182	White-crowned Sparrow	23
Hermit Thrush	1	Dark-eyed Junco (total)	1378
American Robin	2552	Northern Cardinal	244
Brown Thrasher	1	Dickcissel	cw
Northern Mockingbird	2	Red-winged Blackbird	115
Eurasian Starling	8311	Eastern Meadowlark	3
Cedar Waxwing	207	Western Meadowlark	2
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle)	152	Rusty Blackbird	50
Spotted Towhee	10	Great-tailed Grackle	2
American Tree Sparrow	312	Brown-headed Cowbird	200
Fox Sparrow	3	Purple Finch	cw
Song Sparrow	69	House Finch	62
Lincoln's Sparrow	8	Pine Siskin	7
Swamp Sparrow	5	American Goldfinch	226
White-throated Sparrow	46	House Sparrow	236



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

Also available online at nfhas.org

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Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520. (cinraney@ksu.edu)
Also available online at nfhas.org

WE NEED YOU!

PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

Contact Patricia Yeager if interested, and watch our website and newsletter for time and day of meeting.

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Newsletter: [Cindy Jeffrey](mailto:cinraney@ksu.edu) - cinraney@ksu.edu 565-3326

Fieldtrips: Patricia Yeager, Kevin Fay 776-9593

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Contacts for Your Elected Representatives (anytime) Write, call or email: Governor: 2nd Floor, State Capital Bldg., Topeka , KS 66612. KS Senator or Representative: State Capital Bldg., Topeka, KS 66612. Ph# (during session only) Senate - 785-296-7300. House - 785-296-7500. U.S. Senator Roberts <Roberts@senate.gov> U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510. Jerry Moran U.S. Capital Switchboard 202-224-3121.