

## Bird Names and Bird Brains

If you were out with a bunch of ornithologists and said, “Look at the yellow-shafted flicker?” you would be corrected. “That is now called the northern flicker,” they would respond contemptuously. But, don’t despair, for the bird cares not what you call it. In 1917 it was called: yellow-shafted woodpecker; golden-winged woodpecker; woodpecker; yellow-hammer; high-hole; high-holder; yarrup; wake-up; wood-pigeon; high-ho; wick-up; hairy wicket; yawker bird; walk-up! A researcher, who thought he had exhausted all of the names of the flicker, asked a plantation worker the name of this woodpecker as it flew by in its undulating flight. “A wup-d’-wup” he replied. “Why do you call it that?” asked the scholar. “Because of the way it flies; wup-d’-wup-d’-wup-,” he said as he imitated its flight with his outstretched hand.



John Borneman, *Memories of J.B.*

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

Nov. 7- Board Meeting 6 p.m.  
Home of Tom & MJ Morgan

Nov. 12 Sat. Morning Birding  
8 a.m. Sojourner Truth Park

Nov. 22 - DEADLINE ORDER SEED

Dec. 3 - PICKUP SEEDS  
8 a.m - UFM Parking Lot



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

"Time again, I think, for a bit of light mood."

*Four seasons went into a bar one night;  
Autumn to the left, Spring to the right,  
with Summer and Winter in between.  
Such a sight is seldom seen.*

*The barmaid looked at them askance.  
She felt a year older from just one glance.  
"Get on from here," they heard her say.  
"Not all of you at once. Away. Away!"*

*Autumn replied with a colorful smile.  
"We'll only stay for a little while."  
"You can stay for three months, that's allowed.  
But just one at a time. Four's a crowd."*

*"Look--" said Winter. "With flakes of white  
I've covered your tables. Your room's more bright."  
Spring from a corner took an idle broom.  
All she swept up began to bloom.*

*Summer glowed with her mildest heat,  
Saying "Being altogether is such a treat."  
Her long Milky Way, a silvery mist,  
Joined Winter's bright stars, they sparked and kissed,*

*Autumn's Flying Horse (Pegasus) did his flyin'  
with a companion for once, Spring's Leo the Lion.  
So the barmaid held her tongue, as well she might,  
letting the seasons have their fun that night.*

*It didn't last long, just a moment or two,  
for one season's stars had to get back in view.  
They reveled, in fact, a very short while,  
Before drifting on, again single file.*

*But the fun they had had had set its hook,  
Blinking messages was all it took,  
as the joy of it all called for more,  
to bring them back to that same bar's door.*

*That time they came, of course, by day  
While the Sun had to rise and shine.  
Now was a time they could meet and play,  
mingle, interact, and combine.*

*Winter's Big Dog went loping around  
With Summer's Cygnus the Swan.  
And the Spring's Crow could sometimes be found  
On Autumn's Whale--oh, how they carried on!  
Now again and again their revels occur  
Hid by the Sun's blazing glare.  
And for the barmaid, well, as to her,  
Since she works at night she'll be there.*

*She lets them in and sees them begin  
And tries staying awake till the end.  
Alas, it's a battle she can't always win.  
But it's one battle I'd like to attend.*

As usual while the stars are busy at their affairs, the planets, and especially this month the Moon, should be keeping their appointments. The Moon has several notable dates on its schedule. On the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> it will be, while full, the closest it has been to Earth (perigee) since 1948, and won't be again till 2034. According to Bob Berman in *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, it will appear 14% larger than, say, the full Moon of last March, and glow 30% brighter, the effect being at its mostest when the illusion of a "fat Moon" is occurring as the Moon is seen rising or setting. It is no illusion that the Sun, Earth, and Moon will be aligned to have a full Moon, so various tides will take notice and rise to the occasion, augmented perhaps by winds and/or low pressure systems.

Another Moon's chore is to be brightly waning on the 18<sup>th</sup> to make the annual Leonid meteor shower harder to see. Not many shooting stars are expected this year anyway. Earlier, on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, while Venus is reappearing ever higher in the west each evening, the Moon while it waxes will be even higher, with Saturn a faint witness near Venus. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, more southerly, it will be above Mars. And in the east in the pre-dawn hours of the 25<sup>th</sup> it'll slip beneath Jupiter, which will be returning to view, in Virgo, whose brightest star nearby will be Spica. Full that 14<sup>th</sup> at 7a52 CST, new the 29<sup>th</sup> at 6a18.

© 2016 Peter Zachary Cohen

## A Walk in the Woods

Dru Clarke



Having found the new calf – a silvery grey coat made him look like a dust bunny nestled in the tall grass- sooner than I expected, I dropped down out of the meadow into the woods, just because I was content that he was doing fine and I had time to walk.

The woods in early fall isn't as glorious as it is later in the season, but the acorns from the oaks have already fallen, creating a treacherous carpet of smooth wooden marbles, and are a portent for fattening turkeys and woodpeckers and squirrels who stash them for winter fare. One year when the mast was abundant as it is now we could not find our mares. We finally found them, hoof deep in acorns in the chinquapin gallery, happily crunching the fallen nuts. (Their coats became lustrous as a result.) Here is a "bird" or "aerial" tree, where an errant seed has dropped into a crotch where two thick trunks from an oak have divided: the young, spindly hackberry has put out a few tentative leaves to catch the dappling sunlight. It shares the niche with a Virginia creeper vine and a tuft of grass, a trio of quite different plants enjoying a cozy serendipity.

Standing dead wood often hosts fungus with shelf-like symmetry and colors from somber to brilliant: here is a bronze and ivory mass the size of a softball, then another, rosy red and wafer-like. Fallen dead trees, on their "down" sides, shelter myriad invertebrates, especially armored sow bugs and translucent orangish centipedes. Kick a rotten stump and life falls out. Sometimes the fungus, or maybe a virus or bacterium, invades the wood and knotty lumps erupt, giving the tree a wizened character. Galls or burls, like arthritic joints, can reach the size of laundry baskets.

Sometimes a tree falls on its side and doesn't die. It puts down roots and sprouts again, a "phoenix" tree. Their growth is counterintuitive, but a testimony to the tenacity of life. In Great Britain, there is a land use pattern called 'wood pasture.' Lowland and upland sites used for grazing livestock had trees, providing shade, randomly dispersed throughout the pastures. The trees were "pollarded" or trimmed to keep cattle from browsing them, but they would sprout limbs from the crown, giving them a topknot effect. These trees became thickened in their trunks, like behemoth fireplugs, and some are ancient. The land use management plan today cherishes these trees and even conserves dead wood and phoenix trees, so long as they aren't a threat to the safety of folks and livestock. Their conservation has allowed wild species associated with them to flourish as well as keeping an age-old cultural tradition alive.

At home, occasionally I'll take down a very old book from a shelf, open it, and take in the fragrance lifting off its pages. It is akin to vanilla, a breakdown product from the lignin in the wood used to make the paper. This may be why it is hard for people to part with their older volumes, and why they will curl up with a first edition from the last century and fall asleep with the book open on their laps. This may be why a walk in the woods is so satisfying, whether or not one finds something new or interesting to wonder about. Sometimes just breathing there is enough.

© Dru Clarke September 2016

# October Cattails at River Pond

MJ Morgan, photos by Tom Morgan



Along the waterways of River Pond Campground at Tuttle Creek State Park, giant cattails now stand filled with seeds. Some wetland areas are crowded with stands of cattails so dense, they look like a sown crop. In other areas, especially the creek rushing into River Pond, cattails appear in groups of two and three. Cattails are a critically important aquatic plant, sustaining wetland life in many ways. One naturalist has put it simply: “Wherever there are cattails, there’s food.” Sightings of beaver near cattail stands here are linked to beaver preference for the roots and tubers of cattails and water lilies. Many birds feast on the tiny seeds of cattails, as a single velvety-brown pod can release 200,000 seeds! A cattail’s roots and shoots also nourish many kinds of waterfowl and animals. Many observers know that red-winged blackbirds like to sit among the swaying stems of giant cattails, but grebes use them too. The marsh wren attaches a small nest to a cattail stalk and lines it with the soft seedy fluff. Geese and ducks, especially coots, dive for insects and vegetation in the safety of sturdy cattail stems. The irrepressible cattail, the familiar soft brown pod rising among sharp leaves, insures best habitat for the birds we love to watch.

## UPDATES

Thanks to John Row

We were fortunate to have John Row guide us to birding places at the Plant Materials Center on our last Saturday morning bird walk. Black-throated green warblers were my favorite and hearing the call to confirm the sighting was a treat as well. Thank you John.

Alsop Bird Sanctuary  
Thank to Jim Koelliker

Great news! The student chapter of the Construction Science Dept. at KSU (AGC) has decided to take on the project of the pathways and signage at the Alsop sanctuary. You'll see them working at the site soon. Make sure and thank them as you walk past.

## NHFAS BOARD

needs you

### **We are still without a secretary.**

Please consider being a board member and helping our chapter. We meet once a month. Duties are very light, just record the minutes and distribute them before the next meeting. Now that isn't hard! Of course you will also be able to vote and have input on all matters of the NFHAS.



## 2016 Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society **BIRDSEED SALE/FUNDRAISER**

ORDER by: Nov. 22, 2016  
return with payment to:  
NFHAS  
P.O. Box 1932  
Manhattan, KS 66505

PICKUP Date: Dec. 3, 2016  
UFM Parking Lot  
8 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
Checks payable to: NFHAS

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

**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.

**FINCH MIX** consists of 50% sunflower chips and 50% thistle seed.

**FLINT HILLS FEAST** is the premium seed mix: 30% black oil sunflower seed, 20% striped sunflower seed, and 50% white proso millet (with no milo or fillers).

**MEDIUM CHOP** is chopped corn, a little finer and cleaned.

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

**AUDUBON PREMIUM BLEND** is a premium blend of 40% blacks, 40% striped and 20% millet.

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

**SUET CAKES**, in addition to having other nutritious ingredients, the main ingredient is high calorie beef fat. It 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.

**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.

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

**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.

(Taken from Audubon At Home Bird Feeding Basics, <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>)

### **Sales Support Local Chapter Activities**

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.

### **Quality Seed, Easy Handling**

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.

Volunteers welcome! Help unload the delivery truck at 7:45 a.m. and/ or volunteer throughout the morning. Pickup Dec. 3, 2016 8-11 a.m.

TYPE	Unit (lb bags)	Price/unit	number	TOTAL COST
Black oil sunflower	10	\$7.28		
	25	\$15.45		
	50	\$28.12		
Striped sunflower	10	\$8.09		
	25	\$17.17		
	50	\$30.98		
Flint hills feast	10	\$4.82		
	25	\$11.04		
	50	\$20.85		
Cheap-cheap blend	10	\$4.09		
	25	\$10.22		
	50	\$17.99		
Sunflower chips	10	\$11.85		
	25	\$27.71		
Thistle	10	\$20.03		
	25	\$44.96		
Finch mix	10	\$15.94		
	25	\$35.97		
Safflower	10	\$8.99		
	25	\$20.44		
White millet	10	\$4.82		
	25	\$8.99		
	50	\$15.45		
Red millet	10	\$5.31		
	25	\$10.55		
	50	\$18.80		
Peanut pickouts (shelled peanuts)	10	\$15.45		
	25	\$34.25		
Medium corn chop	25	\$8.91		
	50	\$15.12		
suet cake	ea	\$1.47		

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

**COMPLETE this portion and return with payment.**

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

SUBTOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

DELIVERY: \_\_\_\_\_

DONATION: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

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



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 Manhattan, KS  
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 Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520. (cinraney@ksu.edu)  
 Also available on-line at [www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html](http://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](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  
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