

Seven Women Who Make the World Better For Birds and People

by Emily Silber

When we hear the word “naturalist,” we often think of Charles Darwin and his theories, John Muir, the “Father of National Parks,” and of course, John James Audubon. But let’s not forget the women who rallied to preserve the natural realm. From creating the first avian field guide, to ending the feather trade, to dying in pursuit of birds, these seven femmes prove that the history of incredible women transcends any single month. (by Emily Silber)

Ohio native **Genevieve Estelle Jones 1847-1879**, was a self-taught scientific illustrator christened the “other Audubon.” After seeing some of Audubon’s paintings at an exhibition, Jones decided to draw the nests and eggs of the 130 bird species nesting in Ohio at the time.

Harriet Lawrence Hemenway and Minna Hall

1858-1960 and 1864-1944

This two-woman dream team was responsible for taking down the 19th-century plume trade and establishing the National Audubon Society.

Florence Merriam Bailey 1863-1948

She is credited for writing the first known bird guide, “Birds Through an Opera Glass,” published in 1889

Rachel Carson 1907-1964 is most famous for her book, “Silent Spring,” in which she bared the sins of the pesticide industry.

Frances Hamerstrom 1907-1998 This female ornithologist dedicated the majority of her life to just one kind of bird: The Greater Prairie-chicken. Frances Hamerstrom headed a research team that ultimately saved the eccentric species from extinction in Wisconsin. She helped identify the ideal habitat for prairie-chickens, and was also one of the first to put colored leg bands on wild birds—a technique that has helped reveal important information on bird behavior through the decades.

Phoebe Snetsinger (née Burnett; June 9, 1931 – November 23, 1999) was an American birder famous for having seen and documented birds of 8,398 different species,[1] at the time, more than anyone else in history and the first person to see more than 8,000.[2] Her memoir, “Birding on Borrowed Time,” explores this achievement.

Audubon Article: <https://www.audubon.org/news/seven-women-who-made-world-better-birds-and-people?Seven Women Who Made the World Better for Birds and People>

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prairie falcon

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Upcoming Events

- Apr. 2 - Board Meeting 5:30 pm, Manhattan Public Library
- Apr. 8 - Solar Eclipse
<https://science.nasa.gov/eclipses/future-eclipses/eclipse-2024/where-when/>
- Apr. 13 - Sat. Morning Birding
Departing Sojourner Park at 8:00 am
- Apr. 27-28 ANNUL BIRDATHON - OUR BIGGEST FUNDRAISER! See pages 4-5**
- May 7 - Board Meeting 5:30 pm, Manhattan Public Library
- May 11 - Migratory Bird Day - focus on the importance of insects - upcoming info in MAY newsletter and website



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

April again; once again known to some as the poetry month.
Last year I offered a medley. This time I'll wing it on my own.

Here's to the joy of April
with its returning warmth and storms.
It follows after March's madness;
now students are back in their dorms.

Road building crews have awakened
Of detours it's time to complain.
Flagmen alone at the waysides,
delay all but the wind and the rain.

Some circling northbound pelicans
are migrating;
below them homebound birds are
busily mating.

Some fruit trees have started their blooming.
Are they aware of the possible cost?
Do they recall that comfortable April
can crisply deliver a frost?

Some will say that trees do no thinking,
Are marionettes on weather-pulled strings,
Pumping up sap when they are told to,
hearing not when a bird they hold sings.

Great blue herons are back at stalking
their shore sites.
Vultures are gracefully dipping
in their flights.

I don't know about the mentality of trees.
I expect that grass will green and mowers roar.
And that federal taxes will be due on the fifteenth,
as they have been since ninety-fifty-four.

Various sized balls will be kicked, walloped, and thrown.
I don't know what else I can say,
Except to hope that April with only thirty days granted,
Will get us from March on to May.

The big gorilla in the sky this coming month is the total solar eclipse during daylight on the 8th. *Star-Date* tells that the Moon being a little closer than average, its shadow will trace a path at totality up to 123 miles wide, starting off Mexico's west coast and sweeping northeast entering the U.S. at Eagle Pass, Texas at 1p27 CDT. Then covering Austin, Waco, Dallas, Little Rock, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Burlington (Vermont); exiting the U.S. near Houlton, Maine, where its 4-minute totality will end at 3p35 EDT. Folks around SE Missouri will get their second helping after the 2017 eclipse that passed by there, traveling from Oregon to the Carolinas.

For longer term viewing the *Old Farmer's Almanac* suggests seeking shy Mercury which will be having its best appearances for the year during April evenings and September mornings. It will be at its highest point, though still quite low, in the west this month on the 11th.

Then comes a series of meetings with the crescent Moon: below Mercury on the 20th, halfway between Mercury and Venus the 21st, below Venus on the 22nd, above Venus on the 23rd, between Mars and Venus on the 24th, and with Mars the 25th. Naturally to observe it one will have to avert one's eyes from the ever so brighter Venus which will be the ever-Evening Star through the period.

The bright star-like Jupiter will be setting below the Moon early on the evening of the 10th and then begin rising in the wee hours. Else-wise the Moon, during evening hours, will be revisiting its usual suspects: the stars, Aldebaran (Taurus' red eye) on the 11th, El Nath a tip of one of the Bull's long horns, the 12th, the Gemini Twins 14th, Leo's Regulus the 17th-18th, and very closely with Virgo's Spica the 22nd. Then with Scorpius' Antares in the dawns of the 26th and 27th.

It will be new at 1p21 as it eclipses the Sun the 8th; full the 23rd at 6p49. The Lyrid meteor shower is due the night of the 22nd, with no Moon interference.

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To Sleep, Perchance to Dream

Dru Clarke



With Covid, one tends to sleep a lot. Or, at least, nap frequently. More sleep is called for to battle the extreme fatigue, and the normally recommended eight hours isn't enough to combat the raging toxic effects of the virus. Rest, and the requisite sleep associated with it, are essential.

It seems all animals must sleep, although their specific needs for its duration and frequency vary. And the ways they manage it also vary, often in extraordinary ways.

Many four-legged animals, like our domestic cows and horses, remain standing while taking naps of short duration. It's been said that cows nap twenty hours a day. Our white-tailed deer have favorite sleeping spots, usually in tall grass or high on a slope in a wooded area from which they can see in all directions and make an easy escape if threatened. Our chinquapin oak gallery forest is such a place. And, often we find flattened ovals in unmowed, ungrazed fields where they have slept. Some species of whales become neutrally buoyant in the column of ocean water, and sleep while remaining at a given depth. Being air breathers, they must surface at regular intervals, but because their metabolism slows, they can remain submerged for long periods of time. Dolphins (and, probably their closest relatives, the porpoises) sleep hemispherically: that is, one half of the brain 'sleeps' while the other half is fully awake.

Birds sleep in this manner also. It is known as unihemispheric slow-wave sleeping. Frigate birds, those oceanic fliers whose males have apple-sized and apple-red gular pouches, sleep as much as half a day when on land, but while soaring over the waves, the eye connected to the 'awake' brain's hemisphere is facing the direction in which they are flying: it's simply incredible to imagine! It is fairly obvious how this is a fine survival adaptation as it provides for a constant and continuous alertness for environmental dangers like predators.



Where birds sleep depends on the kind of bird it is. Recently, at dusk, my husband went to collect the mail and across the road from the mailbox is a dense woodland bordered by large branching red cedar* trees. Suddenly an entire flock, perhaps a dozen, of blue jays – only blue jays – burst from the closest cedar. They were using this tree as a communal roosting site. Quail, being ground dwellers, roost in dense ground cover. I've seen a single cardinal tucked into the deepest fork of a leafed-out tree, snoozing in a state of torpor. When birds perch, the tendons in their feet lock, preventing them from falling off. Hummingbirds have been found hanging upside down from a twig, fast asleep. Swifts evidently sleep on the wing as they never really land. Most perching birds don't sleep in nests where they've reared their young, but find niches where there is plenty of cover, shelter from the wind and rain. Some cavity nesters, like nuthatches, wrens and chickadees do take advantage of those cavities for a rest, but it is not the norm for most perching birds.

Our companion animals – dogs and cats, mostly – sleep a lot, and our dogs seems to do a lot of dreaming as well, often growling or whimpering and running in place. During our recent bout with Covid, we have been having weird and lurid dreams while sleeping, and odd visual effects and auditory hallucinations while awake. We are at a loss to explain those. We wait for restful sleep, and while it might not cure us, we welcome it.

*Red cedar is the commonly used name for *Juniperus virginiana* and is listed as such in H.A. Stephens' guide "Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines of Kansas"

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2024 Annual Birdathon

24 hour birding - April 27th or 28th



By Jim Koelliker

In 1985, Cecil Best and Clyde Ferguson on a whim during a late April poor fishing outing hatched a plan: to search for as many bird species in a 24-hour period and then send it to their friends to urge them to donate an amount for each species to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society. It worked!

I will be managing the 39th annual Birdathon. Cecil pulled me in and I became friends with Clyde and ever since about 1990 I have been hooked in and now it's an annual must for me. Thankfully, many others have joined with me over the years. A group of birders will join me on my chase around to different habitat areas. But you, as just one birder, can go out and count the number of species you see within a 24-hour period of your choice sometime during April 27th and 28th this year.

An important part of the process is to raise donations for the Chapter, so I hope you would send me your list of species you found along with contact information for your friends, family and anyone who you think would like to be a sponsor. I will send them our report so we can ask them to contribute to NFHAS, a certain amount for each species we see this year. From a dime to quarter or more, you would be surprised how much we can raise.

I will include the additional species that you found in the written report of those my group found and then send that report to your contacts and ask them for their contribution with our report. Some sponsors just give a set amount. Those donating \$20 or more may receive a year's subscription to the Prairie Falcon if requested.

Please send the name and address of each potential sponsor to
Jim Koelliker,
3500 Mintons Lndg,
Manhattan KS 66503

If you don't want to go out alone or don't think you are good enough to ID birds, contact Jim Koelliker (785-776-4915), voice or text, koellik@sbcglobal.net) and I will help you find someone or a group to search with you. Also, you can contact a board member, or drop a note to NFHAS, PO Box 1932, Manhattan 66505-1932 and we will find someone to count for you. On average we see between 90-110 species this time of year.

PS: Please report your list of species to Jim no later than **April 29th** to have them included in the master list. Our list will be included in a subsequent edition of the Prairie Falcon.

More information and sponsor form are on our website nfhas.org.

Be a sponsor or a birder, this is our biggest fundraiser of the year!

If you would like to make a donation for any reason or in someone's name, please contact Patricia Yeager, Merry Bower, or Cindy Jeffrey. (see back page for mailing address, email and phone numbers).



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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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WE NEED YOU! PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

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