

Full moon listening stroll.

We will listen to the night sounds at the Carnahan area of Tuttle Creek Lake on Nov. 24th. Hearing owls is our particular mission but we anticipate other night sounds to intrigue us as well. Silence is golden.

Meet near the toilet building (not glamorous but central and easy to find) at 5:00 p.m. If you do not know this location or would like to carpool, meet at Sojourner Truth Park parking lot at 4:30 p.m. and a lead car will take you to the Carnahan Area. Dress for the cold and bring a flashlight. Car poolers plan to return by 8:00 p.m. Rain or wind over 20 mph cancels stroll.

Hope to see you there.

Patricia Yeager

A pleasant evening was spent with Scott Bean and his photographs of outdoor Kansas. There were about 25 in attendance. Travel tips to the Kansas destinations pictured were shared. The evening certainly inspired me to get out and explore Kansas.

Kathy Bond's mother recently passed and a memorial donation was given to NFHAS in her name. Thank you.

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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 47, No. 3 ~ November 2018

Inside

- pg. 2-Skylight
Pete Cohen
- pg. 3-The Ubiquitous Bird
Dru Clarke
- pg. 4-Start studying for CBC
- pg. 5-Silhouettes of Raptors

SAVE
THE
DATES

Manhattan CBC- Dec. 15- Mark Mayfield
Wakefield CBC- Dec. 16- Chuck Otte
Olsburg CBC- Dec. 21- Cindy Jeffrey
Junction City CBC- Dec. 30- Chuck Otte

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 3- BIRDSEED **PICKUP** - UFM parking lot 8-11 a.m.
- Nov. 5- Board Meeting, 6 p.m. Friends' Room
Manhattan Public Library
- Nov. 13- Saturday Birding 8 a.m.
Sojourner Truth Park
- Nov. 24- Night Listening 5-8 p.m.
Carnahan Cove (see above)
- Dec. 3- Board Meeting 6 p.m.

markherb@ksu.edu 785.776.6495
cotte@ksu.edu 785.238.8800
cinraney@ksu.edu 785.565.3326
cotte@ksu.edu 785.238.8800



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

In mid-summer an agricultural newsletter came containing a diagram resembling a misshapen archer's target, each distorted circle showing areas of Kansas with similar drought conditions. In the bull's-eye off-center was a dark splotch encompassing terrain about 40 miles in diameter that was given a label that meant it was enduring drought 'more extreme than extreme'. We were included, for we'd had 1 1/2 inches of rain since sometime in mid-winter, a situation that was sending our neighbor's tank trailer busily past our mailbox daily as we watered our own. Then at the end of August came a solid week of rain--gentle rains, not the torrents that later began afflicting parts of the East Coast and Asia. So, as I'm having to write this the first week of October, I will leave the atmosphere to form whatever it will exhibit into November and offer this reflection on a

localized yet impressive Flint Hills' spring and summer of 2018.

Again, my thoughts form up in verse, taking this time their cue from a song in Act One of Gilbert & Sullivan's opera, "The Gondoliers", about some people very dependent literally upon water.

Springtime came and summer next,

It was the usual sequence.

But then the weather on some pretext
began to leave us dry and vexed
by rains of little frequency.

Bugs and bees, tomatoes and trees
were equally affected.

The pasture grass declined to grow,
ponds were either dry or low,
some with algae were infected.

Such are the times that are called a drought,
you can deny it never.

Of that there's been no manner of doubt,
no probable, possible shadow of doubt,
no possible doubt whatever.

It's been a great year for mowing the yard,
with no need to bother the mower.

The ground we found kept getting hard,
no splatter of raindrops left it scarred,
nor could many a hoer.

So give three cheers for the watering hose,
and a tank for water hauling.

And that here and there still can be found
water waiting under ground,
when none of it is falling.

Water we cannot do without,
no matter how we're clever.
So when came times marked by drought
there was no possible probable shadow of doubt
that we'd have to do whatever.

Then a week of steady rain; things resumed growing;
and growing, while being too wet for mowing.
Taller and taller the yard grass grew,
fed by deluge, drizzle, and dew,
while dried up creeks went flowing.

So we booted up whenever we went out,
avoided the mud as we went about.
Up soggy slopes, down puddled lanes,
doing umbrella-ed things in the rains,
drippingly free from drought.

Now spring's long gone and summer's by,
and onward we'll endeavor.
We'll take the drenching with the dry,
however generous the sky,
on that I'm sure you can rely, whatever.

Whatever the atmosphere provides, November starts with brighter Jupiter and Mercury diving below the western horizon early on the evening of the first, with Leo's Regulus and the Moon coming up together in the dawn of the 2nd. Venus, returning as the Morning Star, beats the Sun up on the 5th and 6th with the Moon as her consort. She'll be a companion to Virgo's Spica the second week of the month, rising ever higher each dawn to more than two extended fist-widths above the eastern horizon.

The Moon proceeds to pass from right to left of Saturn above a sinking Sagittarius (with its Teapot) the 10th to 11th, then sidles below a dimming but still bright reddish Mars the 15th, then travels with Taurus's red eye, Aldebaran, the 23rd, while the star passes it from left to right during the night. Also on the 23rd Leo begins rising soon after midnight to host the Leonid meteor shower, but the Moon just past full will be the biggest guest at the party. Regulus will chase after the Moon through the wee hours the 29th. The Moon will be new at 10a02 the 7th, full the 22nd at 11p39.

© 2018 Peter Zachary Cohen

The Ubiquitous Bird

Dru Clarke



In my travels (twenty-five countries by last count) I've always tried to find indigenous wildlife, often an exercise in futility. My last close encounter was of not a native, but an invasive (reputedly from Spain!) slimy slug 15 cm long on a trail in Estonia. But, as much of the time abroad has been spent in cities, densely populated and artificially surfaced and built upon, the one species I have found everywhere is the pigeon. It is the ubiquitous bird. So, it deserves at least one page of recognition without apologies for its presence.



Photo by Dan Whiting

The rock dove, domesticated for various reasons, has gone wild throughout much of the habitable world and is commonly known as a feral pigeon (from the French *'pipio'* for 'peeping chick'). Of the several hundred in the Columbidae family (which included the now extinct passenger pigeon and the – dodo, a big surprise to me), the pigeon we have come to know and love (or revile, depending upon your persuasions) seems the most successful. With short legs and beak, a small, rounded head and plump body, the pigeon sports an iridescent sheen of patterned feathers to be envied by the most outlandish couturier. Their wing muscles are a full 31–44% of their body weight, making them powerful fliers and lending themselves to accomplishing heroic deeds in wartime. And those deeds are nothing short of astounding.

The British Dickin Medal, equivalent to the Victoria Cross but given to valorous animals, was given to over 30 pigeons, including Winkie, Tyke, and White Vision, who carried messages during the world wars. Cheri Ami, who was awarded the Croix de Guerre made it through to seek help for the “Lost Battalion” of the 77th Infantry Division in the Battle of the Argonne (WW1), despite her being shot in the chest and suffering a shattered leg, the capsule containing the message dangling from a torn ligament in that leg. 194 men were saved. G.I. Joe, an American pigeon, and Paddy, an Irish one, reported the landing at Normandy and the subsequent success of that invasion during WW 2. During the Franco-Prussian War of a previous century, Parisians used pigeons to report from the city, while the Prussians employed war hawks to bring them down, a similar tactic used by Germans in 20th century wars.



Photo by Dru Clarke

Those lauded birds were carrier or homing pigeons, but others have been bred for 'tumbling,' like the 'Birmingham Roller,' or for extravagantly feathered feet or tails like fans. A street vendor in St. Petersburg had three monochromatic – white, rust, and another- doves on a perch he was plying to passersby to hold. I was sorely tempted.

The head-bobbing behavior of pigeons is not well understood and may have something to do with predator avoidance, which the dodo lost over time (in addition to its vexing inability to fly). In those heads, they are able to do simple math, order pairs, recognize individual people by facial features, distinguish between impressionist painters' works, solve the 'string task' (by choosing the correct string to obtain food), use

selective attention to categorize objects, AND distinguish between malignant and normal tissue images. Now, there's a bird brain for you!

Some medieval naturalists believed that pigeons lacked bile (gall), one of the four humours, which explained their sweet, docile dispositions. (Pigeons indeed do have bile that dumps directly into the gut.) Perhaps they thought, too, that the 'milk' sloughed off from the crops of both parents and fed to the chicks, called squabs, was reminiscent of the gentle nature of a nurse cow. In a poem by James Henry (1798-1876), he writes: *“By what mistake were pigeons made so happy, So plump and fat and sleek and well content, So little with the affairs of others meddling, So little meddled with?”*

Pigeons worldwide range in size from the Crowned Pigeon of New Guinea, the size of a turkey, to the ground dove, the size of a sparrow. 59 species (19% of all pigeon sp.) are classified as endangered, most living on isolated islands or in fragmented habitats. Island species have been threatened by introduced rats, cats and pigs.

Near home we hear mourning doves during summer and last year a Eurasian collared dove who seemed for months to coo insistently for a mate. Growing up, a pair of mourning doves returned to our pear tree to nest each year. Perhaps it was their offspring after a few years, but that tree was their home for part of the year. We knew it was spring becoming summer when the doves settled in.

“Ornament ever fresh and ever fair, of castle and cottage, palace roof and village street alike, and stubble field” (Henry, again), the pigeon is at home everywhere.

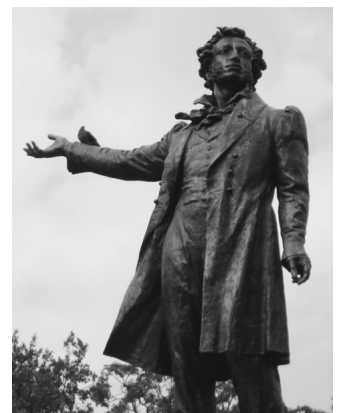


Photo by Dru Clarke

Start studying for the Christmas Bird Counts!



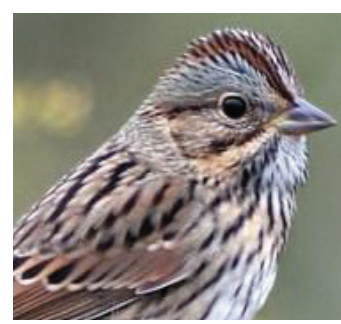
Field Sparrow



Leconte's Sparrow



Savannah Sparrow



Lincoln's Sparrow



Song Sparrow



Swamp Sparrow



Tree Sparrow



Vesper Sparrow

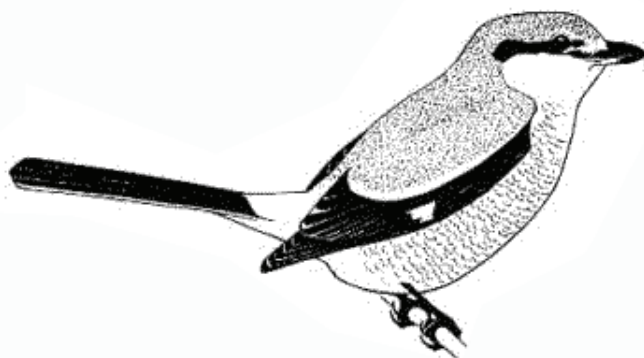
Shrikes: Loggerhead or Northern?



Loggerheads the black mask usually extends narrowly above the bill



Northerns have no black there



Drawing by Michael King Ontario Field Ornithologists
<http://www.ofo.ca/site/page/view/photo.photomainpage>

EAGLES



Bald eagle



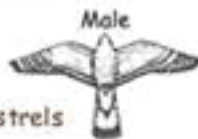
Golden eagle

FALCONS



Female

American kestrels



Male



Merlin



Prairie falcon



Peregrine falcon

KITE



Kite

ACCIPITERS



Northern goshawk

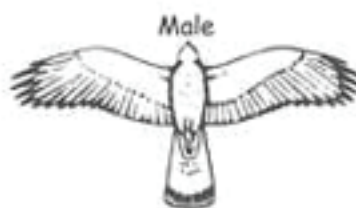


Copper's hawk

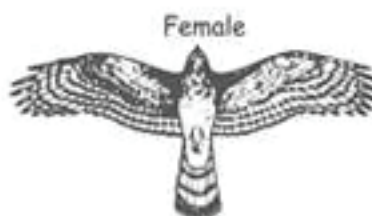


Sharp-shinned hawk

HARRIERS



Male



Female

Northern harriers

BUTEOS



Ferruginous hawk



Swainson's hawk



Red-tailed hawk

OSPREY



Osprey

VULTURE



Turkey vulture



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

Return Service Requested

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 662
Manhattan, KS 66502

Also available online at nfhas.org

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 online at nfhas.org

WE NEED YOU!

PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

The Board meets on the first Monday of each month. The meetings usually last about an hour.

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Board member at large:

Education Chair

Birdseed Chair

NFHAS Board

President: [Patricia Yeager](mailto:pyeagerbirder@gmail.com) - pyeagerbirder@gmail.com 776-9593

Vice Pres.

Secretary:

Treasurer: Carla Bishop - carla.kay.bishop@gmail.com

COMMITTEE Chairs:

Membership:

Programs: Kevin Fay

Butterfly Garden:

Alsop Property: Patricia Yeager - pyeagerbirder@gmail.com
776-9593

Education:

Bird Seed Sales:

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

Fieldtrips: Patricia Yeager, Kevin Fay 776-9593

AOK Representative: Cindy Jeffrey

At-large: Susan Blackford

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 Switch-board 202-224-3121.