



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Tuttle Creek Lake will host a free Eagle Day program on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The event will begin at the Manhattan Fire station located at Kimball and Denison avenues.

Our chapter is again helping by sponsoring a bus and providing a couple of “spotters.” “Eagle Day” at Tuttle Creek, it is a fun day, and you will most likely see eagles!

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. 6 - Eagle Day, Corps of Eng. Tuttle Creek

Jan. 8 - Board Meeting - 6:30 pm
Manhattan Public Library, Friends room

Jan. 13 - Saturday Morning Birding 8 am -11 am
Departing from Sojourner Truth Park



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

January is here again, time to make at least one more New Year's Resolution. Interesting word, 'resolution'. It can describe an intention to set aright something that's

amiss, or it can mean a situation in which something that was amiss has been put aright. It's one of a host of English words that have reverse meanings. Consider that one can be "fast": speedy or stuck. Or, "dust": to sprinkle things about, or to brush them up; and one can be "crowned" with a laurel wreath, or a shillelagh. Etc.

Thus, "resolution" is appropriate for January, as the month gets its name from the Latin word "*ianua*" for gate, something by which one can go one way or the reverse. In either option one goes forward from that point, and thus in early Roman times "Janus" was the name given to "the spirit of beginnings" in a time, so I've read, when tutelary (guardian) deity were conceived of more as abstractions than having human form, an idea that began with the Greeks.

The concept was given a more substantive presence when at one point an arch dedicated to Janus was erected in Rome, through which armies marched to war. Later, a temple succeeded the arch, and since it represented action, its doors were closed in times of peace, opened in times of war. And the gate-spirit was depicted as two bearded human heads back-to-back, so they had a view in opposite directions, to the future and to the past. The theatrical world has adopted and adapted that icon, giving one face an expression of joy, the other of anguish, expressing the extremes of artistic experience.

In its December 9, 2017 issue, *Science News* visited this topic by asking its staffers which kind of crystal ball they would choose: one that showed clearly the past, or the future.

Most chose the past because "origins are more intriguing than the ends, knowing the future would deaden creativity and increase worry" and because no proffered view of the future could be trusted. Preferences for seeing the future involved curiosity, and

time to prepare, and the ability to scoop competitors in getting stories to report on.

Here, lacking a crystal ball of any kind, and substituting Wikipedia and a couple print encyclopediae, I look to the past to pass on that the original Roman calendar had 10 months of 304 days, with the winter season being a period without any names. Then, around 700 b.c.e. King Numa Pompilius, the "semi-mythical" successor to Rome's founder, Romulus, filled the gap by installing the months of January (a post-autumn beginning) and February (named for a purification ceremony that took place under a certain winter full moon). There seems to be a debate whether the beginning of the year was moved from mid-March then, or in 450 b.c.e. under the Decemvirs, a council of ten men that came into existence that much later.

A lot of other calendar manipulations have taken place since then, with January surviving intact, while February lost several days to August during the reign of Augustus, and all that is another story.

As to the near future at least, it's probably trustworthy to predict that this January will not only begin with a full Moon (and a close one at that) but will also end with one on the 31st, a so-called "blue Moon", being the second full one within a calendar month.

In the meantime, while Venus is absent Jupiter will be the "morning star", rising in Libra starting in the mid wee hours and then ever earlier. With Mars so close it will be difficult to distinguish them with the naked eye. It's a situation called an 'appulse' and is solely the result of the perspective of the viewer; the two planets will not be physically close. Nor will the crescent Moon that shows nearby on the 11th.

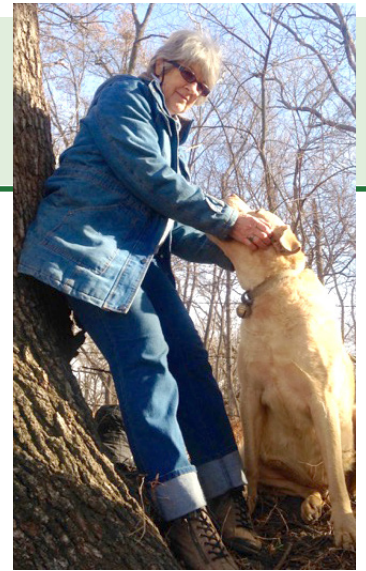
Following Libra comes Scorpius and above Scorpius is Ophiuchus the Snake-Bearer. In the tail (eastward) part of the snake he is carrying across his chest Saturn will appear in time to perform a fade-out in the dawn light.

The brief (usually only about two to three hours long) Quadrantid meteor shower should occur in the night of the 3rd-4th but a more easily visible phenomenon should be the total eclipse of that blue Moon, also a pre-dawn event. Between its 'fulls' on the 1st at 8p24 and the 31st at 7a27, it's predicted to be new the 16th at 8a17 CST.

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One Life

Dru Clarke



Pat (Yeager) called to say she had seen a young buck down in the hind quarters, struggling, unable to rise, in the hollow by the red gate. A call to the sheriff and a deputy came to end its misery. What had precipitated the young deer's injury we did not investigate: an arrow gone awry in flight (it was archery season), an errant bullet (rifle season had not yet begun), a hit and run (unlikely as the road is seldom traveled). Blame unable to be placed, but we didn't want to know as there is so much blame to lay everywhere today.

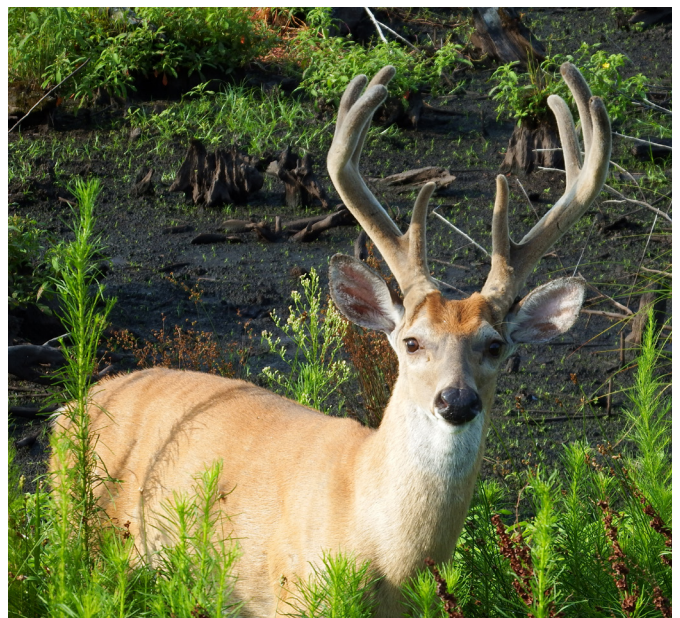
The deputy left the body where it lay. Its eyes were open, unseeing but supplicating in death. It appeared healthy otherwise. Its hide a fawn color going grey, in anticipation of the dreary winter months that lay ahead, months it would never experience. Its antlers were typical of a first-year buck, thin and smooth, gently curved, and few – tined. Over several days it lay there, entire and untouched. Then, it had moved, or been dragged about ten feet deeper into the clearing, its dull, black balloon of belly to one side, ripening limb muscles bared of hair and skin, its gothic arch of ribs pointing heavenward. Now its eyes were closed or, maybe, gone. Days later, not much was identifiable except tufts of hair, its hide empty of life, its head as if already prepared to hang on someone's wall.

A time like this makes me recall a summer death of a deer. At our vacation place in the highlands of New Jersey, on a broad and lush meadow adjacent to the Quequacommissicong (really) Creek, I had come down the hill from the house, ready for a walk along its banks. Just a few feet inside the spongey meadow, the earth was heaving. It undulated, rising and falling as if some giant beast was moving in erratic waves under the soil. I could not believe my eyes, thinking I was hallucinating. On the surface, I could make out the remains of a deer, half buried but still clearly a deer. I crept closer and saw, busily working around the edge of the carcass, a host of reddish orange and black carrion beetles, some dipping their bodies beneath its perimeter, others, I presumed, working diligently beneath it. The beetles were burying the dead deer! I was awestruck, never having witnessed such a phenomenon. (I had seen dung beetles rolling a ball of

manure down a dirt road, and vultures consuming the placenta from a mare, but this was something else entirely!) I sat down and watched this cooperative effort for some time, still not quite believing it was really happening.

Carrion or burying or sexton beetles, in the order Coleoptera, family Silphidae, spend their entire life cycles associated with decay. They experience their complete metamorphosis – egg, larva, pupa, adult – with death. One species, *Nicrophorus americanus*, the American Burying Beetle, is endangered. (I may have witnessed one of the last populations of them in that region.) If they exist in Kansas, they do not do their work in cold months, so hanging around waiting for them to bury the young buck would have been to no avail. Other saprovores or detritivores – consumers of dead and decaying matter – that are warm-blooded will finish it. Coyotes, skunks, raccoons, opossums. Pack rats and squirrels will gnaw the tiny antlers and skeleton. By spring, it will exist only in others' bodies. It will have been resurrected.

© Dec. 2017 Dru Clarke,



*photo by Dan Whiting
(Great Dismal Swamp)*

Audubon of Kansas

Margy Stewart

Dear Audubon Chapter Members,

Audubon of Kansas (AOK) is undergoing a strategic planning process, hoping to identify strengths that we can build on and weaknesses we can overcome.

From the brainstorming already done by the Strategic Planning Committee, the CHAPTERS have emerged as one of AOK's greatest strengths. (All Audubon Chapters are automatically members of AOK and entitled to a representative on the Board of Trustees.) Thus, we would like to invite all members of all AOK chapters to share their thoughts about how we can build on this strength.

May we invite you, as participants in an AOK chapter, to let us know your thoughts in response to one or more of the following questions?

- 1) Would you like to see a state-wide calendar of chapter programs and field trips (there are 7 chapters throughout Kansas)?
- 2) Would you like to connect with AOK interest groups on-line—groups devoted to birding, gardening for wildlife, habitat restoration, photography, environmental theory, book discussion, or other member-interests?
- 3) Would you like to know more about and have more opportunities to interact with properties maintained by separate chapters as well as those maintained by AOK (Hutton-Niobrara Ranch and Wildlife Sanctuary, Mt. Mitchell, and the Connie Achterberg Wildlife-Friendly Demonstration Farm)?
- 4) Would you like to be part of a state-wide communications network—helping to spread the word about Kansas birds, Kansas wildlife and wildlife areas, habitats, and issues specific to Kansas areas?
- 5) Would you like to be part of a state-wide grassroots environmental advocacy network?
- 6) Is your knowledge of AOK a) extensive b) moderate c) slight d) non-existent ?
- 7) What is your perception of AOK's strengths and weaknesses?
- 8) Are you aware of the issues around Quivira National Wildlife Refuge's water rights and AOK's current actions on Quivira's behalf?
- 9) Are you aware of AOK's Sanctuaries Initiative (the effort to create an archipelago of wildlife-friendly/people-friendly wildlife sanctuaries throughout the State of Kansas)?
- 10) Would you like to see an AOK speakers' bureau?
- 11) Do you see other ways AOK can help the chapters and the chapters can help AOK?

Your thoughts will be welcome! Kindly share any ideas you may have in response to the above questions by sending them to me at margystewart785@gmail.com. If you do not have Internet or use email, you may call me at 785.539.5592. Thank you!

With best wishes, Margy Stewart, Chair
Board of Trustees and Strategic Planning Committee, Audubon of Kansas

Mike Corn,
Trustee, Audubon of Kansas
Member, Committee for Quivira

“Quivira”

Mike Corn

Audubon of Kansas isn't standing idly by and watching as the state avoids taking action to restore senior water rights held by the internationally important Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in Stafford County. Instead, AOK made its sentiment clear to Division of Water Resources Chief Engineer David Barfield, who already has determined irrigators in the Rattlesnake Creek basin upstream of Quivira are impairing the refuge's water right, which is senior to 95 percent of the other water rights in the basin.

Quivira has a water right granting it 14,632 acre-feet of water annually. Barfield's analysis found that 3,000 to 5,000 acre-feet annually would be needed to make Quivira whole again. He also found water-use reductions of 30,000 to 60,000 acre-feet a year might be needed to naturally replenish the Rattlesnake so Quivira could get the water it needs.



An acre-foot of water contains about 326,000 gallons.

With the aid of a team of well-versed environmentally conscious lawyers, Audubon of Kansas forwarded a 14-page document to Barfield, detailing how important the refuge is to the environment and wildlife, including a number of threatened and endangered species, such as the whooping crane. The document also served as something of a legal treatise on state and federal protections afforded Quivira—protections which could serve as the basis for legal action, if needed.

The letter listed a series of just three options acceptable to Audubon of Kansas as a resolution. Those options include: administration and reductions in use by junior water rights upstream of the refuge; initiation of proceedings to form an intensive groundwater use control area in the basin; and establishment of a local enhanced management area.

Chief Engineer Barfield, in his response, sought to brush off concerns voiced by AOK, suggesting instead that intervention is premature. Although he suggested the groundwater management district is working on the idea of creating a LEMA, he didn't offer any details. He also said the groundwater management district is exploring the idea of augmenting water supply, essentially drilling additional wells and pumping water into the creek to help meet Quivira's needs.

While, it's true Audubon of Kansas didn't receive the response it had hoped for, AOK continues to closely monitor the situation and will pursue remedies until Quivira's water rights have been restored.

Audubon of Kansas also is closely watching proceedings in northwest Kansas, where the groundwater management district there is asking for the creation of a local enhanced management area, the same idea that might be produced in the Quivira area.

In the northwest Kansas area, however, objections have been voiced by some of the irrigators. The state is only able to approve or disapprove a LEMA proposal, so the effect of opposition from irrigators is uncertain. Irrigators opposing the LEMA have hired one of the state's pre-eminent water lawyers to represent them. The voices of grassroots advocates for wildlife may well be needed to counter the political influence of irrigators.

Audubon of Kansas is keeping a close watch on that effort to see what effect it might have if a LEMA is proposed along Rattlesnake Creek.

AOK: Sanctuaries

Gary Haden, Trustee

Chair, Sanctuaries Committee



Audubon of Kansas held open houses in Lincoln and Morris counties this fall as part of its initiative to develop a robust sanctuaries program.

The open houses were designed to acquaint people from various walks of life with AOK's commitment to manage lands donated to AOK or left to AOK as bequests in accordance with the donors' wishes.

AOK has owned and operated the 5,000-acre Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary along the Niobrara River in Nebraska since 2002, but it had not actively sought properties because of the costs and complexities of managing farmland.

The low-key approach to acquiring farmland sanctuaries began to change in 2015 when the late Connie Achterberg, a successful attorney in Salina, approached Ron Klataske, AOK executive director, about the possibility of AOK becoming the permanent custodian for her childhood home—240 acres of farmland in Lincoln County.

Like many people, Connie did not want to see the trees, fields and wildlife she had loved since childhood dramatically altered by a future owner. Similar feelings by Harold and Lucille Hutton had resulted in AOK becoming the owner of their 5,000-acre ranch in Nebraska, as AOK was the only organization that would make a pledge to the Huttons that their beloved ranch would not be sold, developed or otherwise changed in ways they would find unacceptable.

While Connie and Ron discussed plans to develop a sanctuary program, Margy Stewart and I independently communicated to Ron our interest in leaving our properties to AOK for permanent management upon the deaths of ourselves and our spouses. My wife, Carolyn, and I own 285 acres near Latimer, Kansas, and Margy and her husband, Ron Young, own 320 acres on Lower McDowell Creek Road, 19 miles south of Manhattan. Margy Stewart subsequently was elected to the AOK Board of Trustees, and in January 2017 became board chair. I was asked to chair AOK's Sanctuaries Committee, which met for the first time in May, and was elected to the board in June. Among the goals expressed at the first meeting was higher visibility which led to planning the two open house-field days. Other goals discussed were to demonstrate that wildlife-friendly farms would be people friendly; to make landowners aware of AOK's existing sanctuaries; to generate interest in creation of future sanctuaries; and to make non-property owners aware that they could donate money and time to assure perpetual management of existing and future sanctuaries.

Since AOK's sanctuary initiative was announced with a news release on August 25th and since the two field days, another individual has come forward to advise AOK of his intention to develop an agreement with AOK for donation of his land. A second individual is considering the same.

Early in 2017 Connie Achterberg donated \$50,000 to AOK for a sanctuary management fund. She bequeathed another \$150,000 to AOK in her will. Her giving has created the Connie Achterberg Kansas Wildlife Sanctuaries Endowment Fund—seed money which we hope will multiply five-fold into a sum supportive of our sanctuary system.

Based on previous discussions, I anticipate AOK's Sanctuaries Committee will be scheduling additional open houses and other events at current and future sanctuaries. In addition, the committee plans to gather information on local refuges and honor individual chapters for the work they do maintaining these properties. Nothing is better for wildlife than the creation of habitat—and nothing is better for people than proximity to wildlife habitat!

Additional information on the AOK Sanctuary Initiative or on how to make a donation is available through Ron Klataske at AOK's office in Manhattan (785-537-4385 or 785-313-1138) or by contacting me (also in Manhattan) at 913-522-2004 or by email at gchaden@cox.net.



Ordinary Extraordinary Junco

juncoproject.org

The “snowbird” it is everywhere this time of year! I never tire of seeing this flirty little bird. It is in town, it is the country, at feeders along the road, and in the woods.

The dark-eyed Junco- myriad ways in which juncos fascinated taxonomists, ecologists, physiologists and bird watchers. The diversity of dark-eyed juncos is a complexity that has challenged scientists in taxonomy and evolutionary biology for over a 100 year. Recently with the help of DNA technologies they have started to unravel this amazing diversity.

Pioneering field ornithologist, Alden Miller, traversed the continent recording detailed measurements from 11,774 individual juncos. “Among birds, the genus Junco is especially rich in instance of natural interbreeding of well-marked forms, and it shows great variety in degree and kind of differentiation.” Alden Miller

The apparent contradiction- between dark-eyed junco groups’ striking versus their propensity to interbreed - caused the American Ornithologists’ its species classification no fewer than five 1886 and 1998.

Check out the complete article in the January/February 2018 issue of Bird Watcher’s Digest.

Also, a very interesting video about juncos is at juncoproject.org



differences in coloration, where their ranges meet Union to waffle on times between

2017 CBC Memories



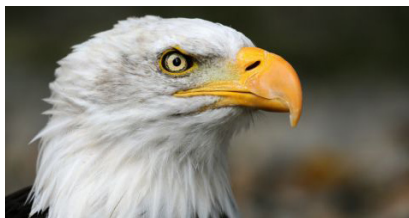
Our President, Patricia Yeager, just getting over walking pneumonia, hit two CBCs- this was the Olsburg Count, then on Saturday she worked the Manhattan Count.



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

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Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520. (cinraney@ksu.edu)
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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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Contacts for Your Elected Representatives (anytime) Write, call or email: Governor Sam Brownback: 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.