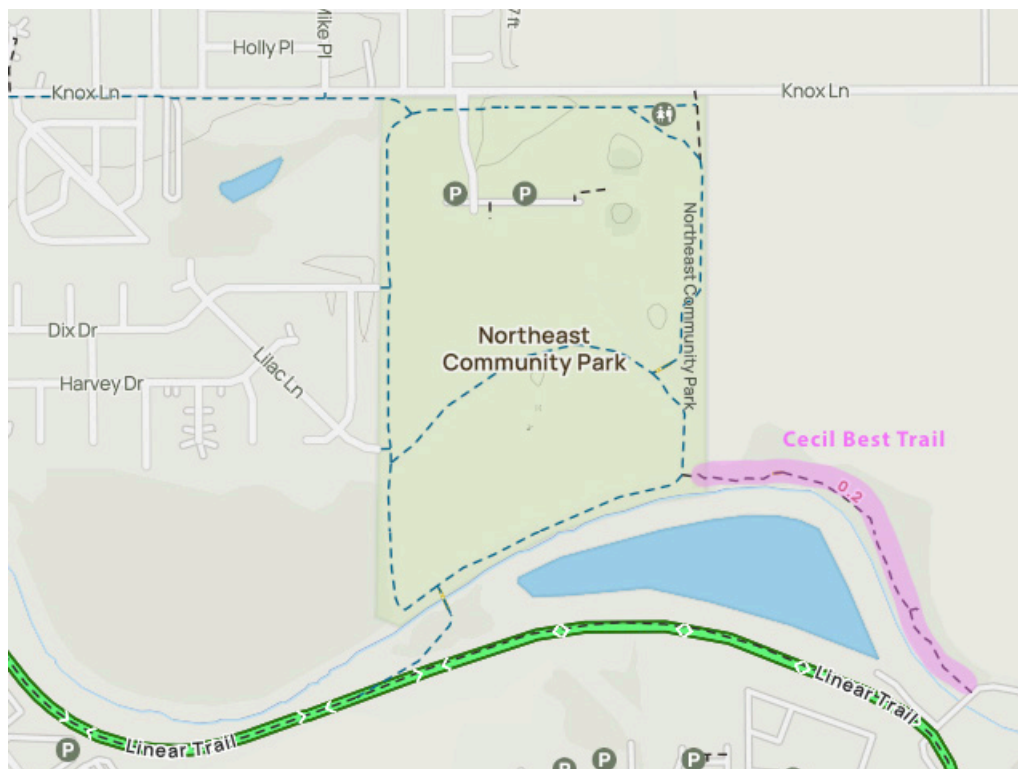




October Feature Project

Saturday, Oct. 26th
10am - 12n

Saturday, October 26th, meet at the Cecil Best trailhead in NE park. The trailhead is located on the East side of the restored prairie area. We will plan to work until 12 noon. Bring a weed eater and/or nippers if you have them, gloves and water. We could use a chainsaw and person to use it for a few bush honeysuckle plants as well. Hope to see you there!

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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 53, No. 2, October 2024

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Upcoming Events

- Oct. 1 - Board Meeting 5:30 pm,
Manhattan Public Library
Study room
- Oct. 6 - OWL field trip
(See Sept. issue of the Prairie Falcon)
- Oct. 12 - Saturday Birding
Departs Sojourner Truth Park at 8 am
- Oct. 26 - Cecil Best Trail upkeep (see above)
- Oct. 30 - Birdseed Sale **ORDER Form** received
- Nov. 9 - Bird seed **PICKUP See pg. 5**

Skylight plus 2010

Pete Cohen



We wish all the best to Pete and Sue. They have moved to Tucson to be close to their son. His address is 4031 North Star Park Place, Tucson, AZ 85716.

We appreciate all the years of his dedication! I am going back through past Prairie Falcons, and rereading his articles!

Here is one from 2010.

Page 14 of June 19th's *Science News* contained a brief report on some research concerning behavior of African topi antelopes that I believe could, if pursued further, perhaps be of broader interest. It seems that female topi "are sexually receptive for one day only"—I presume per year, and not all on the same day—and are inclined to spend their day "visiting several males." And those males respond by striking the same pose and uttering the same warning snorts as they do when sensing the approach of some feared predator. Each male's purpose, and, I gather, his sometime result, is that females are conned into keeping close to him rather than risk wandering off alone to another.

Since the species is apparently not endangered, it would follow that such behavior either contributes to the species' success or at least doesn't materially harm it. The question then arises as to whether the posing males actually become—even if unintentionally—more alert, or self-absorbedly less.

The answer to this would be important because it would seem that, as long as they were surviving, the more talented posers would spread their genes the widest. The next question would be: to whom? Logically the brighter females would catch onto the game the quickest. The brightest of the bright might then make their own careful danger assessment, as the duller females would remain longest in thrall. Those in the mid-range would more likely wander off at random, stirred either by boredom or another male who might be intriguing for other reasons—to the occasional benefit of any predator that might actually be lurking. Thus, while it seems that a correlation of males' posing talent with their breeding season survival, if further correlated with data on the intellectual vigor of the females with whom they mate the most, would not likely provide any palpable new method for energy production, nor the cure for any disease, it could nonetheless provide some useful insight into the structure of humanity's future, for it seems that, with ever more and faster communication, ever more members of our species have been adopting the male topian tactic.

There is deception in the night air above us as well, for, as has been noted, those lights seeming to so cheerfully twinkle are, up closer, seething fulminations. And their steadily, dependably, gently shifting patterns do not hint that there amid them (as also I think I've mentioned) is the asteroid that's been given the name of Apoptis (translation: Death). The latest I've read is that it's still on a trajectory for a relatively near Earth experience in 2029, and if it then passes through a certain invisible "keyhole" in space, it can be expected to return in 2036 to tour the Santa Barbara area. The tour offers to be nearly instantaneous, and for anyone choosing to be present—to quote 1970s comedian Tom Lehrer, who was talking about the threat of nuclear missiles—the party would be "come as you are."

© 2010 Peter Zachery Cohen

We are sad to report our friend and fellow birder, Barry Michie, passed away August 25, 2024
His obituary is: <https://www.ymfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Barry-H-Michie?obId=32884710>

Sun and Sky

Dru Clarke



Both sun and sky had come down to Earth and suffused our meadow with blue and golden light. Azure blossoms of pitcher sage, the flowering heads of yolk yellow Canada and stiff goldenrod - each one trying to outshine the other - made mowing the weedy acre impossible. It is supposed to be a brome meadow, sown with certified seed and fertilized annually for a few years. But it got away from us, as most things have over time, and it has suffered from what Dee McGlashon once rightly, but kindly, said of our place, “benign neglect.”

True, “good” and well managed pastures look uniformly green, with no anomalies of woody invaders, unsightly and gangly stands of hogwort, wingstem, and autumn asters. Broomweed is anathema, a sure sign of overgrazing. Buffalo bur, snow on the prairie, and ironweed – all showy mounds of yellow, white, and purple – betray a lazy landowner. Guilty, guilty, guilty. So, we mow – selectively. Leaving some strips for not only their subtle beauty but for the late pollinators who silently appreciate our largesse.

Not great at remembering the names of our native forbs, I found an app that I rely on to augment my spotty recall. “Picture This” allows me to photograph a plant and not only identify it, but give surprising facts about it: alternative folkloric names and even if the plant is healthy! All those I found and photographed in said meadow were!

The sections I did mow with our 1959 Ford tractor (rusty blue so it blends with the sage) sent dusty motes and tiny edibles into the air and dragonflies had a field day picking them off. They swarmed and dove and strafed the field like a military invasion, and I wondered if aeronautical engineers studied them to design agile aircraft. The shorn grasses and ‘weeds’ (the latter having bloomed earlier in the season) created a spongy mat that will decay into mulch, helping to retain moisture from hoped for rains this fall. I was amazed to find lines of Indian grass and Big Bluestem, their feathery and turkey-footed heads nodding in the imperceptible breeze: remnants of what the meadow used to be before we altered its nature. How long had those seeds lay dormant, in waiting for the right conditions and time to assert their rightful place?

The pitcher sage this year was spectacular, an orgy of profusive wands, azure like the sky, not to be denied its place in the sun. A paler blue, stouter stalk with the same orchid-like blooms was a variant of the dominant richly hued forb – why it was imbued with a more delicate, understated shade is a question I could not answer. But I loved it and felt fortunate to have found it, thriving and proud. I could not, would not, mow it, nor take its compatriots with it – the goldenrods, the hairy aster (it deserves a better name for its cloud of sweet froth), even the lowly croton (meanly called hogwort, because on close inspection, its delicate maroon center ensconced in ivory is simply lovely).

There is plenty (of grass) left for the cows and horses and I’m left with a sense of satisfaction that some nectar will sustain our late migrants. And a piece of sun and sky come to Earth will endure a while longer.



Azure Blue Sage

Salvia azurea

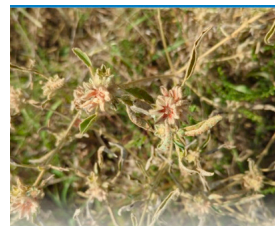
Azure Blue Sage (*Salvia azurea*) is a perennial plant that blooms from summer to fall with showy bright blue flowers that bloom along a flower stem. Foliage emits a pleasant fragrance when leaves are rubbed. An excellent choice for a wildflower garden it thrives in full sun or partial shade in sandy clay or loamy soil.



Stiff Goldenrod

Solidago rigida

Stiff Goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*) is named for its rigid stems and showy yellow flowers which attract butterflies. The plant produces a tufted seed that is dispersed by the wind. Horticulturally, the plant offers bright color to perennial borders or wild gardens.



Hogwort

Croton capitatus

Hogwort (*Croton capitatus*) is an annual invasive weed that grows up to 1 to 3 feet tall. Dense hairs on its stems and leaves give it a grayish appearance. It also goes by the common names “Goatweed” or “Hogwort.”



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CELEBRATION OF CRANES

FRIDAY - SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 1 - 2, 2024

GUIDED TOURS OF QUIVIRA NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE FROM STERLING, KANSAS



MORE:
WWW.AUDUBONOFKANSAS.ORG



Witness one of nature's wonders as Sandhill Cranes and critically-endangered Whooping Cranes migrate through central Kansas this November. Experience the incredible beauty of this ancient migration, and learn more about how the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge provides a crucial inland salt marsh and stopover point for these birds.

Your \$35 Event Registration Includes:

- Self-Guided Birding Tour Materials for Quivira NWR
- Admission to Saturday Speaker Sessions at Sterling College
- Saturday Lunch at Sterling College

Seats in a Guided Tour Van are Available on a Limited Basis for an Additional Fee.

Check In at Sterling College:
125 W Cooper Ave, Sterling, KS 67579
Tours at Quivira NWR

**REGISTER
TODAY!**



ABOUT US

Audubon of Kansas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to defending wildlife and habitat through advocacy, conservation, and education in the central Great Plains.

Mail Your ORDER recieved by
by Oct. 30, 2024
NFHAS
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Manhattan, KS 66505-1932

ANNUAL FUNDRAISER:

BIRD SEED SALE

PICK UP your order Nov. 9, 2024 between 9am and 12n
UFM Community Learning Center PARKING LOT
1221 Thurston St and Manhattan Ave.

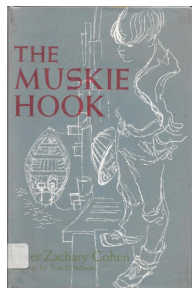
Bird Seed Sale 2024			
	OUR PRICE	Number of bags	Total
Black oil sunflower			
10	\$7.92		
25	\$17.52		
50	\$31.92		
striped sunflower			
10	\$11.12		
25	\$24.72		
50	\$44.72		
flint hills feast			
10	\$9.52		
25	\$20.72		
50	\$38.32		
cheap cheap mix			
10	\$7.92		
25	\$16.72		
50	\$30.32		
sunflower chips			
10	\$15.92		
25	\$35.12		
thistle			
10	\$25.52		
25	\$55.92		
finch mix			
10	\$20.72		
25	\$43.12		
safflower			
10	\$15.92		
25	\$35.12		
White millet			
10	\$6.32		
25	\$12.72		
50	\$23.92		
peanut pickouts (shelled peanuts)			
10	\$20.72		
25	\$43.12		
medium corn chop			
25	\$6.32		
50	\$14.32		
suet cake			
ea	\$2.24		
TOTAL			

Delivery service available within Manhattan City limits for additional \$5

COMPLETE and return with payment:	SUBTOTAL
NAME	DELIVERY
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PHONE	TOTAL
EMAIL	Checks payable to:
	Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society
	Or NFHAS

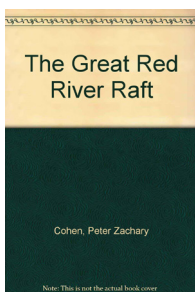
Books by Pete Zachary Cohen

Mostly children and young adults



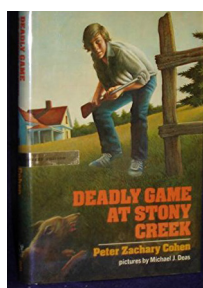
Muskie Hook

Tracking, stalking and animal observation with a certain amount of Native American lore thrown in for good measure.



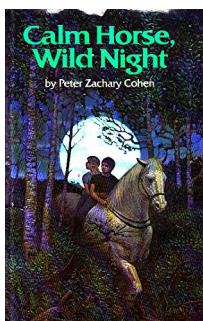
The Great Red River Raft

Describes how in the 1830's riverman Henry Shreve cleared the Red River of a centuries-old, 200 mile logjam with his iron snagboat, thus opening the way for steamboats to Texas.



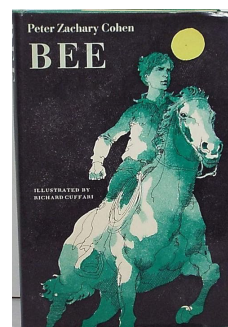
Deadly Game at Stony Creek

A pack of wild killer dogs is hunted down by two teen-age boys.



Calm Horse, Wild Night

A fourteen-year-old places himself in a very compromising situation in order to prevent his huge, gentle timber horse from becoming part of a smuggling scheme.

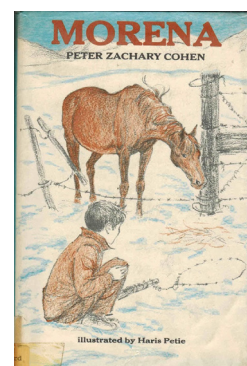


Bee

Herb is determined to work on a cattle ranch. However, Bee, a buckskin gelding, causes Herb problem after problem, and he wonders if he will be able to keep his job.

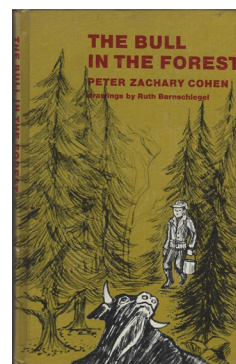


Foal Creek



Morena

A young Boy Scout lost in the hills and an abandoned old mare depend on each other for survival during a heavy snow storm and the freezing weather that follows



The Bull in the Forest

TASK LIST

Volunteers needed

Volunteers needed

NORTHEAST PARK INFORMATIONAL SIGNS RESTORATION

- Clean up the post, sand lightly and stain.
- Finish the "white board" side. Make (or shop for and purchase) and attach container for wet erase pens.

CECIL BEST BIRDING TRAIL- RE-ESTABLISH AND REPAIR

- Look over bridge and make carpentry repairs.
- Sand / finish if need be
- Weed eat / cut back vegetation along trail edge
- Cut down and poison bush honeysuckle
- Wheelbarrow in gravel to fill eroded spots in trail (or use 4-wheeler if someone has one)
- Remove old birdhouses and replace or relocate new ones. Urgent task. So that any virus may be removed.
- Look over wooden benches and repair if need be
- Look over observation deck and sign and repair as needed

MICHEL-ROSS PRESERVE

- Walk through preserve and haul out trash.
- Inspect signage and paint posts.
- Volunteers will be needed to put up a goat fence for 2 hours or so next year. This will need to happen when the bush honeysuckle is just getting its first leaves. It will be scheduled in late winter before other plants start sprouting and before the ticks and chiggers are present. The focus here is to make a long term plan to remove as much bush honeysuckle as possible over the next 5 years or so. Then it will need to be managed every year thereafter. This will eventually keep natural walking paths open and help maintain plant diversity in the 26 acre forested preserve.

As you can see, there is much to do to maintain our green spaces. We will feature a task every month in the Prairie Falcon. Generally, we will work for two hours and do whatever we can. The more hands the more we can get done.

Do you need a last-minute birthday, anniversary or Christmas gift? Give a Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Subscription.

Gift Subscription

Recipient Name _____

Mailing address _____

Email _____

Welcome to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society

This gift is from _____

NFHAS Subscription Information: \$20 subscription

Mail this form with your check (payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society) to:

Attn: Gift Subscription

**Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932,
Manhattan, KS 66505-1932**



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P.O. Box 1932
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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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Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520. (cinraney@ksu.edu)
Also available online at nfhas.org

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The National Audubon Society

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become a member of NFHAS.

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NFHAS local activities, ***you may subscribe to the Prairie Falcon
newsletter for \$20/yr.***

Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon
Society and mail to: **Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932,
Manhattan, KS 66505-1932**

WE NEED YOU! PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

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