



# the prairie falcon

Vol. 33, No. 7  
MARCH 2005

March 16, 2005  
WILDLIFE REHABILITATION  
Cindy Chard-Bergstrom  
See page 2

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY,

P.O. Box 1932, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1932

## NOTICE

A general membership meeting of the chapter was held on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> at the Manhattan Library and the Board and several members were present. We listed what the organization currently is involved in and tried to prioritize the projects.

We have seen the board shrink over the last year or so and we just do not have enough people to keep all of the projects going. We are considering what to do to keep the organization afloat if the board cannot be filled and more members do not become actively involved.

Who is a member of NFHAS? If you regularly receive this newsletter you either 1) joined the National Audubon ( automatically making you a member of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society), or 2) you subscribed locally. Either way you are a member! So, we hope some of you will want to help.

Please consider participating – just let one of the current board members know, or come to a board meeting (first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in 324 Ackert Hall, KSU, on the corner of Denison and Claflin). Or come to the next general planning meeting in May (details to follow in April newsletter). If you already help with some of these projects, we thank you! If you are interested in birds, bird habitat, conservation, etc., please join us and help make the NFHAS a viable and energized organization.

### Activities we would like to continue:

Birding and other kinds of field trips

Newsletter and web site

Programs – we plan to reduce to 3 per year (Oct, Feb, Apr)

Christmas Bird Count

Audubon of Kansas support (All NFHAS members are automatically members of AOK)

Northeast Park Prairie Restoration (currently headed by Jacque Staats)

Cecil Best Birding Trail

Conservation efforts, including Michel-Ross Preserve

Butterfly garden in Sojourner Truth park – Dropped activity unless someone is willing to take over responsibility (Madonna Stallmann who created, maintained this lovely garden for years, can no longer do it)

### Financial NEEDS:

Maintain Michel-Ross Preserve

Maintain Chapter

Maintain Cecil Best Birding Trail

Northeast Park project

Newsletter

### FUNDRAISING Activities:

Birdseed sale (Michael Rhodes, retiring)

Birdathon (Clyde Ferguson)

Store (Marge)

Garden Show (John Tatarko)

Concert (?)

### UPCOMING DATES:

Mar 12 Beginning Birding, 8 a.m.  
Ackert/Durland Parking Lot

Mar 16 Wildlife Rehabilitation  
221 Ackert Hall, KSU  
Dinner 5:45 p.m.  
Program 7:30 p.m.

Apr 9 Beginning Birding

Apr 24 Birdathon  
(call 539-0483)

FYI Apr 29 - May 1  
Wings N Wetlands Weekend  
Great Bend, KS  
620-792-2750

On the back page, please note the open positions on the board. If you are interested in any position or just want to help out with an activity, please let us know. ANY OTHER IDEAS?

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## MARCH PROGRAM

Mar. 16, 7:30 p.m.

221 Ackert Hall, KSU

Wildlife Rehabilitation  
Cindy Chard-Bergstrom  
KSU Veterinary Medicine

Kansas State University's Veterinary Medicine complex is home to a renowned wildlife rehabilitation center. Here, injured wildlife of all descriptions, including songbirds, raptors, reptiles, and mammals, are treated and cared for with the goal of eventual release back to the wild.

Some animals, due to their injuries, are not able to be released, but can often perform an important educational role. Join us as we learn from Cindy Chard-Bergstrom, microbiologist and local wildlife rehabilitator, of the important link wildlife rehabbers serve. She will discuss the procedures for admitting, treating, and rehabilitating her patients, with emphasis on the stringent licensing and housing requirements designed to ensure the well-being of the animals. She will discuss some special roles wildlife can play, including foster parenting, and will have one or more animal patients with her.

**Please join us Wednesday, March 16, 7:30 p.m., in 221 Ackert Hall, KSU, for this special program. You are also invited to join us, before the program, for dinner with Cindy Chard-Bergstrom at the Gold Fork Restaurant, 1641 Anderson, at 5:45 p.m.**

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What is a AMCR, INBU, GBHE, BCCH or NSTS?

Ask anyone who participates in banding birds, they'll tell you. These are codes for the names of birds, and the general rules (although I think there are exceptions) are:

For a one word name, use the first four letters -- AMCR is American Crow

For a two word name use the first two letters of each word -- INBU is Indigo bunting.

For a three word name use the first letter of the first two words and the first two letters of the third word -- GBHE is Great Blue Heron.

For a three word hyphenated name use the first letters of each hyphenated word and the first two letters of the un-hyphenated word -- BCCH is Black-capped Chickadee.

And for four word names use the first letter of each word -- NSTS is Nelson's Sharp-Tailed Sparrow

Banding codes can be found at

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/manual/aspectst.htm>



My wife, MJ, is a morning person. She had been writing footnotes for her dissertation for over four hours, when she took a break to prepare lunch on Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. After we had eaten the last crumbs, I suggested we go to the zoo. MJ said she was too tired. I suggested I jog over there by myself. She said it was our zoo and we had always gone together. But as usual her innate flexibility and love of life won through, and she wished me a pleasant trip.

I puffed up the hill quickly. Got to get my blood flowing. I skipped down the steps from the hill, and a loud vocalization was permeating the zoo. A prairie dog was lying beside a burrow, uttering “Ki ... Ki ... Ki ...” and with each utterance its upraised tail would jerk forward and then immediately jerk back to punctuate its vocalization. Other individuals were beside their burrows, listening attentively. SPRING was coming. I had dreamed it. Others had dreamed it also.

A red-tailed hawk picked up a piece of leafy detritus and hopped up the stairway of branches to a forked structure of branches attached to a wooden post, and deposited it – perhaps depositing the first piece of nesting material. Such hawks can also be seen outside of cages, exulting in their freedom. But their presence in this cage might help people appreciate them. Perhaps it might help me appreciate them. I wonder if this hawk longs to nest in a tall cottonwood far above the maddening world.

Peacocks crowded the sidewalk beyond the cage. One stood a scant few yards from a bobcat crouching, staring intently at the unwary bird. I softly stalked past him, keeping some distance away to respect his right to privacy. His eyes followed my movement, then he followed me, not with the nervous, stereotypical pacing of a bored animal, but with the interest of a healthy animal enjoying the play of his own muscles and the intriguing diversion of keeping pace with a moving life form. As I reversed my path, he changed direction to follow and then regretfully looked after my departing form.

The Osage (tribe) considered the spots on bobcat fur as a symbolic representation of the stars in the heavens – the starry firmament that could enwrap them in the night and keep them safe. I had once watched a bobcat and her offspring, as the starlight faded, leaping gracefully. They are an inspiration. They are treated humanely at Sunset Zoo. Several months ago, the keepers moved these cats from the north cage to the south cage to give them more privacy from the crowds that flow around the north cage.

I watched the eyes of a swift fox as it watched me. I thought, it's enough. I don't want to be greedy. And I'm missing my wife. The changing seasons of life are evident today, on a Sunday appropriately enough. I paused for a moment of reverence to hope it would always be so.

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### Wings and Wetlands Weekend

FYI: Wings and Wetlands Weekend APRIL 29-MAY 1, 2005-- Registration for the festival is required and pre-registration is strongly recommended. For more information or to receive registration information, contact the Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau at 620-792-2750, or e-mail the Bureau at [information@visitgreatbend.com](mailto:information@visitgreatbend.com). Registration forms are available online at [www.visitgreatbend.com](http://www.visitgreatbend.com) and [www.cheyennebottoms.net](http://www.cheyennebottoms.net)

More information next month, in the April Prairie Falcon



The Devil you say

A friend said, “how many are you up to,” and I said, “ninety,” and he said, “are you making any money on it,” and I said, “no, I’m losing my shirt.” We both laughed. “You need to learn how to get paid for it,” he said. Curiously, he never asked if I was having fun.

The morning after I returned from a 350-mile loop through west-central Kansas, and right after making plans for finding another bird, I looked up “obsession” in the Oxford English Dictionary. This was sheer perversity on my part, but I was curious about its origin.

The oldest use of the word dates to 1513, when it referred to the “act of besieging.” By 1605 the word had taken on a darker tone, defined as “The hostile action of the devil or an evil spirit besetting anyone.” Modern usage drops the supernatural aspect with “any influence, notion, or fixed idea which persistently vexes or assails, especially as to discompose the mind.” Personally, I favor the middle definition. Spending all my time and money trying to find 100 birds in Kansas in January – it’s not my fault, the devil made me do it.

It ain’t pretty

I walk in the door with 20 minutes to spare, kiss my wife, rub my rabbit, slam down a beer, claw into better clothes. It’s the annual Blue Rapids Chamber of Commerce dinner and I’m almost late. The duffel bag, scope and tripod are dumped in the middle of the floor. The car remains littered with the detritus of a long road trip, the thermos lost under one of the seats, maps folded haphazardly, the remnants of a half-eaten lunch crushed in a paper bag. I’m ready in five minutes. Now if only my mind would catch up to my body.

It’s hard switching from one state of mind to another. One moment I’m racing from one reported sighting to another and the next I’m listening to a speech on economics. I’m not here and not there either, but inhabit a ghostly middle ground.

As the speaker drones on, I catch myself drifting backward. I can’t shake the frustration I felt after driving up to the gate at the Jeffrey Energy Center, north of St. Marys, and asking the guard permission to scope out the lake. Sure, he said, all you have to do is sign in. But the guard inside wasn’t so cooperative. He shook his head and told me he couldn’t allow birdwatchers in. Hunters yes, birders no. You mean I can kill ducks but I can’t look at them, I said. His eyes smiled but his face did not. That’s it, he said.

But most troubling was something that came to me as I was speeding off after barely glancing at the Trumpeter Swan at Lake Shawnee in Topeka. I recalled reading a letter where the author decried listing on the grounds that it reduces the wonder of birds to a checkmark and turns the birder into a robotic, insensate drone. At the time I deemed her daffy, but I now realize she’s partly right. Any pleasure I’d felt upon finding a new bird was rapidly subsumed by the need for another. I was a junkie needing a fix.

Pete Janzen, a friend in Wichita, had warned me against this. “I know what listing can do to a guy,” he said, “and it ain’t pretty.” Most troubling, though, was when he called it my “Quixotic dream.” Again the OED: “Inspired by lofty or chivalrous but false and unrealizable ideals.” I didn’t like the sound of that last phrase, not a bit.

Coming in from the cold

My dreams began filling with birds, but these were not the species I’d been looking for. These were grotesque, deformed birds, with twisted legs and splintered beaks, with black holes for eyes and cries like the grinding of broken glass. No longer the hunter, I was the hunted. The miles tend to blur together until all that’s left is the sameness of the road. Place names where birds were found were abridged to shadowy pinpricks on an unreadable map, associated with a particular avian species but detached from any tangible recollection other than that of winter’s fierce grip. More real than the Long-tailed Duck at Clinton Lake was the unrelenting north wind, and the gray sky, the gray land, the gray water. The Swamp Sparrows pished up from the frozen cattail marsh below Milford Dam were intrinsically bound to the aural memory of footsteps

*continued on bottom of page 5*



Did you know 2005 IS the 100th anniversary of the National Audubon Society?

Picture the year of Audubon's founding, 1905; Theodore Roosevelt was President, milk cost about 10 cents a gallon, and Albert Einstein published his Theory of Relativity. In the world of high fashion, ladies donned hats adorned with heron and egret plumes, and many even wore elaborate millinery creations containing entire bird bodies.

In response to the plunder and subsequent decimation of plume bird colonies, several local Audubon Societies agreed to take aggressive action and form a united front to protect birds and their habitat throughout the nation. On January 5, 1905 they officially incorporated to form the National Association of Audubon Societies for the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals, later shortened to the National Audubon Society.

In "Hats Off to Audubon," Jennifer Price salutes the pioneering women who helped kick start the modern environmental movement, and Audubon in the process. As Price recounts, in 1896, two Boston socialites met over tea to discuss their mutual distaste for the unregulated plume industry, a bloody business that decimated bird populations, yet which flourished due to the nation's craze for hats adorned with feathers, wings, and even whole birds.

These two firebrands eventually formed the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and soon similar

Audubon Societies began to spring up across the nation, led largely by women. In 1905 many of these local groups incorporated into the National Association of Audubon Societies for the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals (later shortened to National Audubon Society). Under the new umbrella organization, Audubon activists were successful in enacting legislation that would both protect the nation's birds and put the plume industry out of business.

During its first several years, the fledgling Audubon organization racked up an impressive list of accomplishments, including passage of the Audubon Plumage Law (1910), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918), and establishment of its first two bird sanctuaries (1924): the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary near the president's former home in Oyster Bay, New York, and the Paul J. Rainey Sanctuary in coastal Louisiana.

*Gleaned from the National Audubon website:*

*<http://www.audubon.org/>*

*National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" on Sunday, Nov. 28, 2004, featured an interview with Jennifer*

*Price, you can hear the interview by visiting NPR website:*

*[www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4189955](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4189955)*

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crunching through ice-encased reeds. Each new bird-Bewick's Wren north of Tuttle Creek Lake, Merlin at Fancy Creek State Park, Black-billed Magpie west of Kirwin-possessed its own unique imprint of ruthless winter.

It was a duck that broke my resolve. My arrival at Wilson Lake, near Russell, coincided with a freezing drizzle that turned the road slick and treacherous. The horizon disappeared, visibility reduced to less than a half mile at times. And for all my searching I missed three critically-needed birds and nailed but one, a Northern Pintail in an open lead of water framed by ice. I thought I would freeze to death scoping out the lake. On the return leg, bitterly chastising myself for not taking to heart the economics lesson, I cursed the endless miles and the pittance of a reward. The sun went down long before it set. The end came far to the west, after another 400-mile trip garnered a single bird, bringing me to 93. With two days remaining in the month, I told my wife I was through. She didn't argue.

Night had fallen by the time we pulled into the driveway. Wearily, I opened the door and turned on a light. "Sheba, we're home," I called. Our Angora rabbit leaped from her cage in a joyous bunny dance. I knew exactly how she felt.

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In case you've not been reminded, the year ahead contains not only the 157<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Edgar Allan Poe's cosmological treatise, *Eureka*, which, as discussed earlier, presaged the concept of a "big bang." It also marks our hundredth cruise around the Sun since our planet received the news of something called "Special Relativity," that has apparently come to stay. And I expect that "something" is the word most commonly used to begin a description of it among non-specialists, some of whom have special relatives who come to stay, but this is different.

For though, no doubt, Relativity has eventually affected various conditions of our lives, its effect on how we treat our relatives, or neighbors, is unclear. The truth seems to be that along with Boyle's Law, the Laws of Thermodynamics, etc. it has not created the kind of harsh societal divisions that followed the theses of Copernicus, Darwin, etc.—except perhaps among specialists who could penetrate Relativity's arcaneness sufficiently to debate it and its possible effects. So far be it from me to destroy that peaceful situation by explaining it all to everyone. Especially since *Astronomy* in its special February feature describes Albert Einstein as one of the world's greatest mathematicians, while *The Economist*, which has been in continuous existence since four years before Poe's *Eureka* appeared, says he was not particularly "adroit" at math (making it I guess was one of his relative weaknesses). See January 1, 2005 issue.

I will just hope that the year known as 2005 provides a happy anniversary to all who are having one! One widely noted anniversary this period will be our umpteenth millionth arrival at the equinox, this year at 6a33 CST. It's an anniversary with a little bit of an asterisk to it, because the Earth's wobble (caused largely by the jealous tugs of Sun and Moon) brings us to that point a little bit earlier each year, and this precession of the equinoxes has been a bane to calendar devisers and I presume to astrologers for years. If one ignores it, before too long the Sun will be shining its warmest and longest in February. An added

adjustment has been added this year, for *Science News* reports that the subduction causing the Indian Ocean tsunami had an effect like that of a twirling skater pulling in his/her arms, and the Earth is now spinning 2.67 microseconds a day faster. So if those folks who tightly manage their time feel they haven't been getting the right amount of sleep lately, that is the reason.

None of this sways Old Man Moon from prompt fulfillment of his appointed rounds. However, that means he won't be in the front row when Mercury (by the combined opinions of *The Old Farmer's Almanac* and the Univ. of Texas' *StarDate* becomes by far the brightest personality in Pisces low in the western twilight when the Sun sets through the first third of March. Instead, on March 5<sup>th</sup> he attends to Mars (about the width of an extended fist to its right) as a shrinking crescent, then he goes to be renewed, till he shows up again as a thin but blooming crescent. On the 12<sup>th</sup> he'll be above Mercury, who will be fading, and on we go.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> he'll help locate Capella (on the edge of home-plate-shaped Auriga the Charioteer) and Aldebaran (the red eye in the V face of Taurus the Bull), by sailing between them. On the 17<sup>th</sup> he's near the center of a n equilateral triangle of Capella in Auriga, Saturn (below the Gemini twins), and Orion's own left shoulder: Betelgeuse. He continues near Saturn on the 18<sup>th</sup>, then on the 22<sup>nd</sup> he's left of Regulus, the base of Leo's forward half. On the 25<sup>th</sup> he finally gets around to chasing the very bright Jupiter (whose been available all night all month) across the sky, almost catching up by dawn and stays close on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile he's getting ready to effect a full eclipse of the Sun on April 8<sup>th</sup> for the South Pacific and just a taste for the southern edge of the United States.

This is also the prime season to watch in the west after sunset for the brief, vague, widespread cone-shaped apparition of the Zodiacal Light, a luminescence caused by spacial dust scattering the Sun's light. Moon new 3a10 10<sup>th</sup>, full 2p58 25<sup>th</sup>.

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MAR 12

**Arctic Action Day** is Sat. March 12. Please check our website <http://www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html>) for details of possible movie showings of “Oil on Ice” and “Being Caribou.”

APRIL 2

**Clean-up scheduled for the Michel-Ross property on Saturday, April 2, from 1-3 p.m.**

**NEED: Workers (bring gloves and a few heavy-duty trash bags)  
Volunteer with a pickup truck to haul the trash to the landfill**

**If you can help, contact Jan Garton at 539-3004 or [jrexcoyote@aol.com](mailto:jrexcoyote@aol.com).**

**Do some birding in the morning, grab lunch and help with the cleanup in the afternoon!**



### Prairie Chicken Blind for March 15 to April 15, 2005

Konza Prairie Biological Station (KPBS) is taking reservations for its Prairie Chicken Blind for March 15 to April 15, 2005. Viewing the courtship behavior of the Greater Prairie Chickens will be allowed with a guide assigned by KPBS with a charge of \$10.00/person. No flash equipment is allowed. Professional photographers require special permission from the Director and a

site fee will be assessed. Details of where to meet and times will be given when you make your reservation. For more information or to make a reservation, please call Dr. Valerie Wright, Environmental Educator/Naturalist, KPBS, or Annie Clark, Education Assistant at 785/587-0381 or e-mail Annie, [bunny@ksu.edu](mailto:bunny@ksu.edu).

If you have an idea or want to submit an article for the Prairie Falcon, the **deadline is the 15th of the month** for the following month's issue. Mail to Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520 or email [cinraney@ksu.edu](mailto:cinraney@ksu.edu)





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**Subscription Information:**

Introductory memberships - \$20 per year; then basic membership is \$35 annually. When you join the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of the National Audubon Society and receive the bimonthly Audubon magazine in addition to the **PRAIRIE FALCON**. New membership applications may be sent to NFHAS at the address below; make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership Renewals are handled by the National Audubon Society and should not be sent to NFHAS. Questions about membership? Call toll-free, 1-800-274-4201, or email the National Audubon Society [join@audubon.org](mailto:join@audubon.org).

If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in our local activities, you may subscribe to the **PRAIRIE FALCON** newsletter for \$15 per year. Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, and mail to: **Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan KS 66505-1932.**

**RARE BIRD HOTLINE:** For information on Kansas Birds, subscribe to the Kansas Bird Listserv. Send this message **<subscribe KSBIRD-L>** to this address **<listserv@ksu.edu>** and join in the discussions!

**NFHAS Board**

President:	Judy Roe	539-5519
Vice President:		
Secretary:		
Treasurer:	Jan Garton	539-3004

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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Conservation:		
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Newsletter:	Cindy Jeffrey	468-3587
At-Large Board Members:	John Tatarko, Ingrid Neitfeld, Paul Weidhaas	

Audubon of Kansas Trustee: Hoogy Hoogheem

**Addresses & Phone numbers of Your Elected Representatives (anytime)**

**Write** ✉ - or call ☎

Governor Kathleen Sebelius: 2nd Floor, State Capitol Bldg., Topeka KS 66612. Kansas Senator or Representative \_\_\_\_\_: State Capitol Bldg., Topeka KS 66612, Ph.# (during session only) - Senate: 785-296-7300, House: 785-296-7500. Senator Roberts <http://roberts.senate.gov> or Brownback: US Senate, Washington DC 20510. Representative \_\_\_\_\_: US House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515. U.S. Capitol Switchboard : 202-224-3121. President G.W. Bush, The White House, Washington DC 20500. Information about progress of a particular piece of legislation can be obtained by calling the following numbers: In Topeka - 800-432-3924; in Washington - 202-225-1772. Audubon Action Line - **800-659-2622**, or get the latest on WWW at <http://www.audubon.org/campaign/aa/> To find out who represents you go to: [www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/mylegis](http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/mylegis)