



# the prairie falcon

Vol. 33, No. 5  
JANUARY 2005

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY,

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

January 19, 2005  
Tallgrass Legacy Alliance  
Greg Wingfield  
221 Ackert Hall, KSU  
7:30 p.m.

## Tallgrass Legacy Alliance Greg Wingfield The Nature Conservancy

The Flint Hills Initiative will be the topic of Greg Wingfield's presentation. As part of the Conservancy's ongoing efforts to preserve the relatively intact tallgrass prairie landscape in the Flint Hills, the Kansas Chapter has initiated a community-based conservation program called the Flint Hills Initiative. This initiative involves multiple strategies to abate critical threats in the greater Flint Hills region. The Nature Conservancy's conservation goal is to maintain the unfragmented nature of this landscape, and to improve the quality of site-specific habitats for target species and natural communities. Through voluntary cooperative efforts the Kansas Chapter is working with landowners and public and private entities to not only maintain the nature of the Flint Hills but preserve its ranching heritage and economic base.

*Before each program, we invite our speakers to join us for an informal dinner and discussion. Feel free to join us this month at Valentino's (Alco shopping Center) at 5:45 p.m.. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments are served after every meeting. All meetings are open to the public.*

### Field Trips

#### BEGINNING BIRDWATCHING WALK

Join us Saturday, Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> and every second Saturday at 8 a.m. in the Ackert/Durland parking lot on the KSU campus. We will carpool to a local birding hotspot and should return by about 11 a.m. Birders of every age and interest level are welcomed. Children are especially encouraged to attend. For more information call Patricia Yeager (776-9593) or e-mail her at [pyky@flinthills.com](mailto:pyky@flinthills.com).

### INSIDE

- 2 PRESENTS FOR ALL SEASONS
- 3 BEE GUM
- 4 SKYLIGHT
- 5 SEAFOOD
- 6 STATE OF THE BIRDS
- 7 TAKE NOTE

### CONTRIBUTORS:

PETE COHEN  
DRU CLARKE  
THOMAS MORGAN  
NFHAS BOARD

### UPCOMING DATES:

- Jan 8 Eagle Day, Corps of Engineers Tuttle Creek, 9 a.m.
- Jan 8 Beginning Birding, 8 a.m. Ackert/Durland Parking Lot
- Jan 19 Tallgrass Legacy Alliance The Nature Conservancy 221 Ackert Hall, KSU  
Dinner 5:45  
Program -7:30 p.m.
- Feb 9 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MTG
- Feb 12 Birdseed ORDER deadline
- Feb 12 Beginning Birding
- Feb 16 Eagles in Kansas
- Feb 25-26 Garden Show  
Contact John Tatarko to help
- Feb 26 Birdseed PICKUP

PRINTED BY  
CLAFLIN BOOKS & COPIES  
MANHATTAN, KS



## Presents for All Seasons

dru clarke

This is the season for gift-giving, and some we will discard soon after receiving them, while others we will treasure forever. This is the story of a kind of “present” that has lasted a lifetime.

In New Jersey, where I grew up, we had a summer place in the highlands near the Delaware River. At the foot of the steep hill, where the lane scrawled through a deciduous woodland up to the stuccoed stone house, was a gravel and cobble-bottomed creek called the Queequacomissicong. We called it “our” creek. (Others called it Milford Creek.)

Just upstream from the low water bridge at the ford was a bend where another stream from our neighbor’s farm flowed into it; there, a large, flat rock jutted out over the riffle, a shallow reach where the water raced. I used to kneel on that rock and peer into the stream, pretending I was the White Rock Lady (White Rock was a brand of beverage and its icon was a beautiful fairy-like woman with diaphanous gown and wings). It didn’t matter that the rock was brown: it was white to me. Usually I had nothing on but a pair of underpants, so it was easy to pretend to be dressed as she was. I think that rock and stream bend are where I learned to love freely flowing water and everything associated with it. I was “inside” this rock and stream and they are “inside” me even today. To me, that stream and that rock were natural gifts freely given to me at a formative time in my life, my middle childhood, when I first began to make the world that I encountered my own. Later in life I taught Ecology and Marine Science, and now do volunteer stream



studies with groups of school children and their teachers. I still look for rocks in Kansas streams like the one from my childhood for kids to kneel on today.

To my brother, who is eight years older than I, the creek meant something different. He and the neighbor boys fished in it (for trout and eels), and when raging floods tore through the channel, he cursed it for keeping him from crossing it in his car. A concrete ford changed the bottom where we crossed, but “my” rock upstream remained for my son and his two boys to enjoy as they were growing up. My mother and father saw the creek as a

boundary to intruders. The resident ducks and the hermit thrush who foraged in the streamside willows sensed it as habitat. County engineers saw it as a route next to which they laid sewage pipes. To passersby it was a landscape to enjoy. Sometimes it was an “attractive nuisance,” as many drove their cars into the ford to wash them. So, as you can see, “place” means something

different to each one of us who experiences it.

When my mother died in 1998 (she lived there in her later years), we were forced to sell the place. Fortunately, a doctor from Princeton “fell in love with it,” and he has appropriated its identity and made it his own. My mother is buried in a cemetery in Milford and her gravesite, marked with a stone the color of “my” rock, is oriented so that when you stand next to it you can look up the valley to the hills through which the creek flows. She’d like that.

© 2004 Dru Clarke  
(The White Rock Lady)

Note: This essay will appear in a collection of essays entitled *Sacred Stones to be published in book form this fall.*

---

“In the southern Appalachians the tupelo, or sour-gum, is a prime bee tree. Subject to heart rot in maturity, these trees are often used by wild bees - hence the old term ‘bee gum.’” *From “Bee gums and long sweet’nin’” by John Madson, 1977, Audubon, v. 79, p. 32-37.*

BEE GUM  
tom morgan



In this month's column about gums, I will speculate about the history of the names – bee gum, sour gum, or black gum – since the original meaning of these phrases has been lost in the mists of time, and therefore, is an ideal topic for an amateur naturalist, such as myself, to sink his teeth into. The tree, *Nyssa sylvatica*, is usually known as sour gum or black gum, and I suspect that these phrases were chosen because of the presence of a gummy substance that was deposited by the bees in the hollow trunks of old trees.

An unrelated tree, sweet gum, is named for a kind of gum that is exuded from the tree itself. In contrast, black gum exudes no gum and possesses none (unless the gum is carried and deposited into the hollow heart of the tree by the bees.)

Honey bees were introduced by the British colonists of Virginia and Massachusetts between 1622 and 1638. Swarms of honey bees escaped from the colonists and began occupying hollow trees, and there might have already been “gum” in the black gums in the mid-1600s. The black gum was, of course, given this common name after the arrival of the English-speaking colonists. The name was in common parlance prior to the years of 1748-1752, when George Washington recorded black gum in his records as a land surveyor.

Honey bees deposit several types of gummy substances in hollow trees. In addition to honey and wax, they deposit a mysterious substance known as “propolis” or bee glue. Propolis was listed as a drug in British pharmacopoeias in the 1600s. This resinous substance has anesthetic, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and anti-viral properties. Perhaps it may have been a medically-valuable “gum” that British colonists obtained from feral honey bee colonies in the 1600s.

There is currently a modest resurgence in the medical and veterinary interest in propolis. The most valuable usage of propolis seems to be in the treatment of difficult-to-heal sores. This substance is rather brittle when cold, but softens and becomes very sticky when warmed. It is difficult to remove from skin due to its interaction with the oils and proteins of the skin. I remember a dog named Dotty that my parents adopted. For the rest of Dotty's long life, she had a sore on one of her paws. She continually licked that sore and prevented it from healing. If I knew what I knew now, I would attempt to treat that sore with a mixture of vaseline and bee glue.

Commercial propolis contains about 55% resinous compounds, 30% beeswax, 10% oils, and 5% pollen. The bees acquire ingredients to make propolis by harvesting

healing resins from wounds in tree bark and by harvesting resins from dormant leaf buds. For example, in early spring, the large buds of our eastern cottonwood will be coated with resin that the honey bee may harvest. This spring, I'm going to taste one of the buds. I've read a short assertion that the resin prevents the leaf bud from opening until warm temperatures arrive, and I would like to learn more about this ... but mostly I would like to taste the resinous substance. Perhaps it will taste like propolis in its most essential purity.

Honey bees seem to feel the need to seal up any cracks and holes that would allow moisture or cold air to seep into their living quarters. They also weatherstrip the entrance to their living quarters with propolis so that it will be more weather tight and easier to defend from marauding animals. This substance's antimicrobial properties could be partly responsible for the fact that there is a lower incidence of microbes in the recirculating air of a honey bee metropolis than there is in the fresh outside air.

Propolis has been important in the medical treatment of problems of the gums. Southerners especially used propolis on mouth and gum sores in the 18th and 19th centuries. The black gum was also known as the toothbrush tree, because the soft fibers of its twigs could be twisted and used as a toothbrush without injuring one's tender gums. This could have provided another inspiration for calling the tree a gum tree. However, I'd rather not believe that this wonderful tree was named for its ability to treat our gums. I hope this tree was named for its association with the gummy glue that the bees use.

I was inspired to write about bee gums by MJ Morgan, an early American historian whom I married on the 27th of November, 2004.





I think it would be interesting this season to take note of an early U.S. cosmic theorist, who conceived that our universe had expanded from a single source, decades before such a concept became part of mainstream science. He, of course, received the mainstream response accorded so many forward thinkers, being derided even by some of his friends as proposing “monstrous nonsense” and “blasphemy.”

He arrived at such notoriety by an unusual path, having translated a Raven’s remark, hauntingly mourned the lovely Annabel Lee, and created C. Auguste Dupin, the brilliant unofficial investigator, with a confusable sidekick, who tackled the Murders at Rue Morgue about the time Sherlock Holmes would’ve been born.

Edgar Allan Poe was born January 19<sup>th</sup> in the same year that produced Abe Lincoln and Charles Darwin, 1809. In 1848, in the year between the his young wife’s untimely death and his own, he published essentially his last work, a book of some 100 pages forthrightly titled “Eureka.” That is, “I have found it.”

In 1848 the U.S.-Mexico War was at its close, emigrant traffic on the Oregon Trail was starting its seventh year, God-with-an-L (gold) was about to be discovered in California, and the first meeting of the women’s suffrage movement was about to be held in Seneca Falls, New York. Geologists had realized that the Earth’s crust revealed a history of many changes, and astronomers saw increasing evidence of the same thing through ever-improving telescopes. The leading Nebular Theory held that our solar system and other finite sky objects had precipitated from original misty matrixes that had been very like the various nebulae that could still be seen among the constellations. Uncomfortably the new telescopes were showing that at least some of those mists were not mists, but congeries of more finite stars. What was going on?

Based upon the science current around him, what Poe found was an understanding of our universe which happened to be as much at odds with the story in Genesis, taken literally or figuratively, as it was from views that regarded the universe as a

continuum without beginning or end. No matter, for he felt he could explain the how, who, what, and some of the why of it, including the presence of black holes in the firmament and the question of how it all would end.

The “where” he decided, was immaterial. Ahead, I’ll try to condense his contribution. If you want to get ahead of me, the book is still available in several editions, at costs from the commonly affordable to the exquisite. Another person’s 18-page summary can be found at:

[www.poedecoder.com/essays/eureka/](http://www.poedecoder.com/essays/eureka/)

Meanwhile the Winter Wheel will be rolling. This is a spokeless (in fact it’s completely inaudible) wheel whose dark center is decorated with glittering rhinestones. Its rim encircles, clockwise from the 6 o’clock position, the Big Dog’s (Canis Major’s) hind paws, to the Little Dog (Canis Minor, at about 8), Auriga the five-sided Charioteer (about 12), then the arc of its leading western semi-circle wraps around Taurus the Bull just ahead (west) of the Pleiades on his shoulder (about 2:30), thence below Rigel, Orion’s left foot (about 4) and back to 6 o’clock.

Our brightest star, Sirius, highlights the Big Dog. To the eye the Little Dog is essentially a two-star constellation, with bright Procyon a finger width or more below its dimmer companion. Capella, the third brightest star in the north, is at the upper left angle of the pentagon. Taurus’ red eye, Aldebaran, is in the V a little SE of the Pleiades, and likely Orion needs no introduction. I wouldn’t mind bulging the wheel a little to include the two lines of Lepus the Rabbit below Orion. By about January 17<sup>th</sup> the Big Dog’s paws will be above the horizon by dark, then nightly the Wheel will be wholly rolling across the sky, until it begins to run off the western horizon late in February.

After lingering with Mercury, Venus will bow out of the morning sky about January 20<sup>th</sup>. Slightly above and to the S. of Mars will be noticeable near equally reddish Antares in Scorpio before it moves off into Ophiuchus. Jupiter will rise in Virgo from 1 a.m. to 11 p.m. as the month progresses. Saturn will continue making a third, and brighter, Gemini Twin, already up by dark. Moon new 10<sup>th</sup>, full 25<sup>th</sup>.



## Worst Eco-Choices

Caviar – wild paddlefish and sturgeon eggs  
 Chilean seabass/toothfish  
 Cod – Atlantic  
 Grouper  
 Halibut – Atlantic  
 Marlin  
 Monkfish/goosefish  
 Orange roughy  
 Rock cod/bocaccio/Pacific rockfish  
 Salmon – farmed or Atlantic  
 Shark  
 Shrimp/prawns – imported  
 Skate  
 Snapper  
 Swordfish  
 Sturgeon – wild  
 Tilefish  
 Tuna – bluefin

POCKET

# Seafood Selector



e

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

finding the ways that work



## Best Eco-Choices

Abalone – U.S. farmed  
 Anchovies  
 Arctic char – U.S. and Canadian farmed  
 Catfish – U.S. farmed  
 Caviar – farmed paddlefish and sturgeon eggs  
 Clams – butter, geoducks, hard, littlenecks, Manila  
 Crab – Dungeness, snow from Canada, stone  
 Crawfish – U.S.  
 Halibut – from Alaska  
 Herring – Atlantic sea herring  
 Mackerel – Atlantic, Spanish  
 Mahimahi/dolphinfish – U.S. from the Atlantic  
 Mussels – farmed blue, New Zealand green  
 Oysters – farmed Eastern, European, Pacific  
 Sablefish/black cod – from Alaska  
 Salmon – wild from Alaska

Sardines  
 Scallops – farmed bay  
 Shrimp – Northern from Newfoundland, U.S. farmed  
 Spot prawns  
 Striped bass/Atlantic rockfish – farmed and **wild**  
 Sturgeon – farmed  
 Tilapia – U.S.

Red text indicates a consumption advisory due to mercury, PCBs, dioxins or pesticides. For detailed advice, visit [www.oceansalive.org/eat.cfm](http://www.oceansalive.org/eat.cfm)



©2004 Environmental Defense, New York, NY  
 Cover illustration: [www.chartingnature.com](http://www.chartingnature.com)



---

## NATIONAL AUDUBON RELEASES STATE OF THE BIRDS

---

On Tuesday, October 19, The National Audubon Society released the “The State of the Birds,” a report documenting the health and abundance of North America’s birds. Appearing in the October issue of Audubon Magazine, “The State of the Birds” paints a disturbing picture. Almost 30% of America’s bird species are in “significant decline,” a situation that signals seriously degraded environmental conditions in the habitats these birds call home.

The bottom line: the state of the birds in 2004 is not sound. In particular, a disturbing 70 percent of grassland species; 36 percent of shrub-land bird species; 25 percent of forest bird species; 13 percent of wetland species; and 23 percent of bird species in urban areas are showing “statistically significant declines.”

According to “State of the Birds,” these declines are abnormal. Not part of the natural, cyclical rise and fall of bird populations, “statistically significant declines” are due to outside factors such as loss of native grasslands, overgrazing, development of wetlands, bad forest management, invasive species, pollution, and poor land use decisions.

Audubon’s President John Flicker sees a clear message in this report. “Like the canary in the coal mine warning the miner of danger ahead, our birds are an indicator of environmental and human health,” he said. “Birds signal that we are at risk next.”

But, Flicker also sees a clear path out of trouble. “People may have created these problems, but people can solve them, if we act now,” he stated. To that end, Audubon is now addressing the findings of “State of the Birds” in its conservation agenda at the legislative and policy making level, and in the states where the greatest conservation challenges exist.

Compiled by Audubon Scientist Greg Butcher, “State of the Birds” analysis makes the case for private and public action. Based on the report’s findings, Audubon is advocating for improved grassland, forest, and wetland protection, stronger pollution controls,

partnerships with private landowners, and backyard habitat programs for homeowners.

“State of the Birds” summarizes the status of nearly 700 bird species native to the continental United States, focusing on the condition of species in each of five habitat types: grasslands, shrublands, forests, wetlands, and urban areas (the fastest growing habitat type in the U.S.). Written using USGS Breeding Bird Survey and Audubon’s WatchList - cross-referenced with Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count data, the report will be issued on a yearly basis, and will inform Audubon’s conservation agenda, identifying key areas requiring immediate action.

Birds not only serve as reliable indicators of environmental conditions, they also contribute greatly to the U.S. economy. Keeping birds - and their home habitats - in good condition is not only a good conservation policy, it is also good business. The worth of birds beyond their aesthetic and conservation value is something that is beginning to be more fully appreciated, a situation that has created allies for bird conservation in small and large business, and local governments - entities that have been historically unlikely conservation partners.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, 70 million Americans - one-third of all adults in this country - call themselves birdwatchers. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service notes that they contribute at least \$32 billion in retail sales, \$85 billion in overall economic output, and \$13 billion in state and federal taxes, creating 863,406 jobs,” continued Flicker. “Birds also contribute to the bottom line in more subtle ways, providing free pest and weed control, distributing seeds, and pollinating flowers and crops. American businesses and communities simply cannot afford to ignore the state of the birds.”

A digest of the report was published in the October issue of Audubon magazine and a further analysis is available on the Audubon website, [www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds](http://www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds)



## VERY IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

**ATTENTION all members** of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society:

As you may have noticed, we have been functioning with only a partial board this past year and a half. We have managed to get by due to extra efforts by the remaining board members, as well as efforts by several members that are dedicated to specific activities of our organization, for example, Michael Rhodes and the birdseed sales, Dave Rintoul and the Manhattan CBC, to name just two.

The board will be losing one or two members within the next year, and so it seems appropriate and necessary to evaluate our situation: what we do, why we do it, what should we do, and how do we do it. We **MUST** have input from **YOU**, our members. So to that end, there will be a General membership meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup> where we can discuss the future of the organization

Agenda items will be published in the February newsletter. However any member may add items to the agenda at the meeting and are encouraged to do so ( or contact a board member prior to the meeting).

Like most organizations, there are highs and lows and periodic self-evaluation – Where are we going? Where do we want to go? And how do we get there?

**It is that time for the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society. This is your organization, please help us.**

**Mark your calendar:  
General Membership Meeting  
February 9, 2005**



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)



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



Printed on 100% post-  
consumer recycled  
paper

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

***Return Service Requested***



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 on the World Wide Web at the URL <http://www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html>

**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:	Carla Bishop	539-5129
Vice President:		
Secretary		
Treasurer:	Jan Garton	539-3004

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Conservation:	Judy Roe	
Northeast Park	Jacque Staats	
Education:	Madonna Stallmann	
	Richard Pitts	
Program:	Paul Weidhaas	293-5559
Fieldtrips:	Patricia Yeager	776-9593
Membership:	Carla Bishop	539-5129
Finance:	Ann Feyerharm	539-0483
Public Outreach:	Dolly Gudder	537-4102
Land Preservation:	Paul Weidhaas	293-5559
Newsletter:	Cindy Jeffrey	468-3587
At-Large Board Members:	John Tatarko, Ingrid Neitfeld,	

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: 913-296-7300, House: 913-296-7500. Senator Roberts 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)