

JANUARY 17, PROGRAM
7:00 P.M. KSU ACKERT HALL, RM 324

“DAYS OF OUR PRAIRIE-CHICKENS”

JACKIE NOOKER

(SHE WILL FINISH HER PH.D. AT KSU THIS SPRING)



After four years of watching prairie-chickens display, I sometimes think I'm watching a soap opera. Some males know how to look and act in order to attract a female and some just do not know how to impress a lady. Young upstarts try to take over the display area every year and some females have just as much attitude as the males. Crazy things happen when some chickens take performance-enhancing drugs (obtained from the researcher).

Come find out what makes a prairie-chicken “sexy,” see a video showing never-before-seen female-female aggression on leks (yes, a chick fight), and find out who survives until the next season and who doesn't.

Please join us for a fun conversation about the current research on Konza Prairie concerning the courtship behaviors of prairie-chickens - seriously!

Join Jackie for dinner prior to her talk - at 5:30 p.m. at Hunam's in Westloop.

NORTHERN Flint Hills Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 1972, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1972



prairie falcon

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Vol. 35, No. 5 ~ JANUARY 2007

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DAVE RINTOUL

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PETE COHEN

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Upcoming Events:

- JAN. 4** NFHAS BOARD MEETING,
(TOM & MJ MORGAN'S HOME)
- JAN. 6** EAGLES DAYS (CORPS OF ENGR)
TWO SESSIONS, 9 A.M AND 10 A.M.
*NFHAS CONTRIBUTES MONEY FOR THE BUSES
USED FOR THIS EVENT.
- JAN. 13** BEGINNING BIRDING
ACKERT PARKING LOT 8 A.M.
- JAN. 17** PROGRAM: PRAIRIE CHICKEN RESEARCH,
JACKIE NOOKER, KSU PH.D. CANDIDATE,
- FEB. 8** NFHAS BOARD MEETING
- FEB. 21** “RAIN TO RECREATION” A SUCCESS STORY
OF CIVIC PLANNING AND HEALTHY WATER
Mike Beezhold, MANHATTAN Public Library



**THE 58TH ANNUAL MANHATTAN
CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS
DAVE RINTOUL**

HELD SATURDAY DEC. 16 2006.

Sixty-five “field” observers and eight feeder-watchers braved the semi-tropical temperatures of the day, enhanced by a few mosquito flocks, to count 48,553 birds, representing 103 species and 8 forms/morphs. One count-week species (Pine Siskin) was added on Tuesday Dec. 19.

We added two new species to the count checklist, never before seen on a Manhattan CBC. These were, as expected for a season that has been unseasonably warm to date, birds that should be south of here at this time of year, Eastern Phoebe and Chipping Sparrow. Other hints of a warm season included our second-ever Red-Shouldered Hawk (photographed late in the day by Brandon Magette and Doris Burnett), one Blue-winged Teal, two Hermit Thrushes, an Orange-crowned Warbler, and seven Ruby-crowned Kinglets. But typical deep-winter birds were also present, such as Winter Wrens, Lapland Longspurs, Prairie Falcons, and 1253 Common Mergansers. One juvenile Golden Eagle joined the raptor list, and our counters also found an average number of Bald Eagles (53). Single birds included Ross’ Goose, Wilson’s Snipe, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike (missing from the count for most of the past decade) and a Red-Breasted Nuthatch (from a feeder count).

New high counts were obtained for Cackling Goose (159), American Wigeon (98), Common Goldeneye (620), Cooper’s Hawk (12), American Coot (31), Eurasian Collared-Doves (35), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (39), Carolina Wren (130), Song Sparrow (302), White-crowned Sparrow (103), and Lapland Longspur (350). With the exception of the goldeneyes and the longspurs, this list also hints at a warmer season prior to the count. Goose numbers were also quite low, relative to long-term averages, and only one gull species (Ring-billed Gull) was found, reflecting both a lack of cold weather and the absence of the tasty tidbits formerly found at our long-lost landfill.

Encouraging trends included an increase in the numbers of Black-capped Chickadees, which hit a post-West Nile low of 138 in 2004, increased to 195 last year, and hit a nearly-average number of 333 this year. Blue Jays showed a similar trend (124 in 2004, 179 in 2005, and 301 this year), but this also could be due to the incredible acorn crop this year, as manifested by the large number of Red-Headed Woodpeckers (44) seen this year.

Thanks to all who participated, either by counting birds or by preparing delicious food for the compilation chili dinner feast. Hope to see you there again next year!

Dr. David A. Rintoul, Associate Director <drintoul@ksu.edu>

A BIG THANK YOU

to Carla Bishop and all her helpers for the Compilation Dinner!!

What a great tradition!

OLSBURG CBC

I think it was a record number of volunteer observers -- 12. We saw 70 species and a total of 5,228 individual birds. The ducks and shorebirds were fewer than in past years - very little water - you can almost walk the entire mile under the Randolph bridge - but still reported

140 Canada Geese,
2 Gadwal,
143 Mallard,
8 Northern Shovelers,
1 Ring-necked, 32 Goldeneye,
4 Hooded Merganser,
17 common Merganser

We also saw

9 red-headed woodpeckers,
44 Red-bellied woodpeckers,
18 yellow-bellied Sapsuckers,
25 Downy, 8 Hairy,
42 Northern Flickers,
11 yellow-shafted and
4 red-shafted.

And while we didn't get a magpie this year - we had lunch at the "Magpie" cafe in Olsburg. The weather was a bit cooler on Dec. 18, than the Manhattan CBC day.

It was a good day for raptors -
69 red-tailed hawks, 2 Kriders,
4 Harlan's,
3 Ferruginous,
2 Coopers,
2 Merlins,
6 rough-legged,
1 sharp-shinned,
28 Northern Harriers,
6 Bald Eagles,
1 Prairie Falcon,
7 American Kestrels.

And Hoogy came through a Townsend's Solitaire!

JUDY ROE'S CBC: IN ENGLAND ON DEC. 16TH. HERE ARE MY SPECIES!

1 barn owl (fantastic!), 1 great spotted woodpecker, 18 long-tailed tits, 11 blue tits, (0 great tits), 2 moorhen, 67 coots (they have white on their bills, not red here), 24 mute swan, 74 tufted duck (new one for me), 6 Egyptian geese, 1 sparrowhawk, 7 chaffinches, 24 (English) robins, 1 dunnock, 2 grey heron, 2 pheasant, 7 magpie, 6 cormorants, 10 wood pigeons, 6 collared doves, 2 wigeon, 2 Canada geese, 1 nuthatch, 2 crows, 85 gulls (sp?), 15 mallard, 8 blackbirds, 1 jay

Way to go JUDY!

Winter is in full swing, and it's interesting that all the songs in praise of the season's character – from "Jingle Bells" to "Winter Wonderland" – that filled the air as it approached, seem to be fading away now that it is here. But still with us are those annual tenants of the winter sky, the big constellations with their brilliant stars. Sing a song of Taurus, Sirius, Orion; Leo, Gemini, Procyon, as they go gliding by.

Perhaps "gliding" is not the best word. Robert Service found a moment in "The Cremation of Sam McGee" to feel a rough, yet lively vigor around him on a Christmas night: "*And late that night as we lay wrapped tight in our robes beneath the snow, and the dogs were fed and the stars o'erhead were dancing heel and toe...*" With the stars blotted out, Robert Frost found a gentler pleasure in "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening."

Those two lived in a different time, which is to say a different world, and "Jingle Bells" pre-dates both of them, but most of the other upbeat songs of approaching winter are of more recent vintage, related I suspect to the advent of central heating. For by using my Bartlett's as a window to the past, under the topic of "winter," I see mostly references like "*Winter is a bad guest,*" "*Barren winter –* ", "*Cold of cheerless winter*", "*One mile is two in winter,*" etc. Amid that array one quote does allow that "*Winter is the mother of spring,*" and Robert Louis Stevenson has a lighter note with a quatrain going: "*In winter I get up at night and dress by yellow candlelight. In summer quite the other way, I have to go to bed by day.*"

I know of a limerick that speaks of a time when printed material required individual pieces of type to be set in rows by hand. Bartlett's hasn't discovered it but it goes: "*There once was a very slow printer to whom came this idea in mid-winter, that he could expand his lot by taking an "s" from his slots, then describing himself as a sprinter.*"

While, however, people mingle words and weather, the naked-eye planets are seeing fit to return. Venus will be the star as the evening star, brightly setting from about 6p30 to 7p30 as the month progresses. Mercury will also be showing in

the evening twilight, but much less prominently. Saturn, in Leo, will be available for consultation all night, rising ever earlier from about 8p30 to 6. Mars, which will be riding particularly high this year, will be coming up in the pre-dawn hours, with Jupiter, the brighter and paler, in Ophiuchus, Mars from a little after 6a00 till a little before, Jupiter from a little after 5a00 till about 3a30.

As to Ophiuchus, the question is whether the Snake-Handler is harder to find or harder to pronounce. The easiest guide is the highly recognizable, but lowly (in the south) passing Scorpio, though Scorpio's pickaxe-like head barely beats the sun up now. Ophiuchus, rather thinly and dimly, occupies a lot of dark space above Scorpio. A large stump-like triangle with somewhat curving sides represents a man from the waist up. The snake he's said to be holding makes a shallow loop across his belt line. A short ways to his left, our right, a sharp zigzag of modest stars bends upward to a small triangular cluster, the snake's head. And that is why – those who've taken Latin will understand – that segment of stars is called *Serpens Caput*. To the other side, a more stretched out but upward trending line of equally modest stars represents *Serpens Cauda*, or tail. I use the word "upward" relative to Ophiuchus' chest. As he rises his right side will be lying rather parallel to the eastern horizon.

I tend to say "Oh-fee-you" and then finish with "–chuss or –cuss," depending on mood. And if I pause to wonder how come the holder is Greek and the snake is Latin, I'm reminded of Emerson's warning about insisting on foolish consistencies and think of other things. Ophiuchus, I gather, is the celestial representation of the God of Medicine who derived his skills from snakes, which by legend possess great restorative powers. Thus, the caduceus as the symbol of medicine today. On October 10, 1604 a supernova, or exploding star, appeared in Ophiuchus, and Galileo offered it as proof against the then prevailing dogma that the heavens were, well – consistent.

Full moon, January 7th, 8a57; new 18th, 11p01.



TAKE NOTE



Jan Garton is retiring as NFHAS Treasurer. We will miss her - and all she brings to the Board (she has been a member for 27 years!) that's a lot of history. And as you can see by these "random" photos of her - she did much more than keep the books.

THANK YOU, Jan!!!



HELP!

Anyone interested in taking on the position of Treasurer?
PLEASE!

There are still vacancies on our Board - Program chair, Education Chair, and Conservation Chair.

We are still looking for someone to take over the Birdseed Sales (taking orders and ordering the seed for pickup.) This only occurs three times during the year -- in October, December, and again in February. Volunteers help on the day of pickup.

Please contact Patricia Yeager at 776-9593.



Birdfeeder by Don Yokey

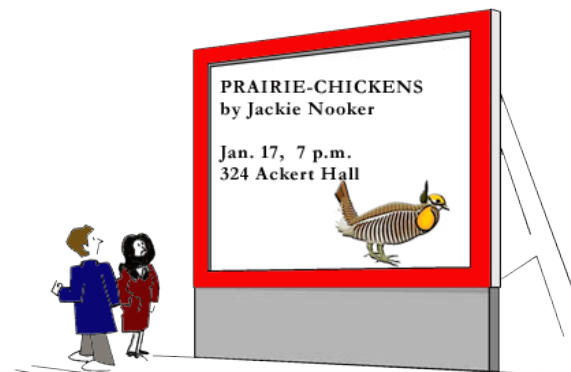


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If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in our local activities, you may subscribe to the Prairie Falcon newsletter for \$15/yr. Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, and mail to: Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS, 66502-1932.

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

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