



the prairie falcon

**VOL. 29, No. 5
JANUARY 2001**

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. Box 1932, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1932

KANSAS WILDLIFE ~ GERALD WIENS

Gerald Wiens, co-author of the book "Kansas Wildlife" will give a slideshow and discussion that vividly displays the wide variety of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles found in Kansas.

He has a MS Degree in Environmental/Wildlife Biology from Emporia State University and worked for 17 years for the Wichita Audubon Society as Director of the Chaplin Nature Center in Arkansas City. Gerald was awarded the Kansas "Conservation Educator" of the year award in 1993, and his award-winning photos have been featured in books, travel guides, calendars, magazines and exhibits.

January 17, 2000 - Before each program, we invite our speakers to join us for an informal dinner and discussion. Feel free to join us this month at The Golden Wok (next to El Cazador) at 5:45 PM. The program begins at 7:30 PM, 1014 Throckmorton, NE corner of Denison and Claflin. Refreshments are served after every meeting, please bring your own cup. All meetings are open to the public.

Field Trips

BEGINNING BIRDWATCHING WALK

Join us Saturday, Jan. 6th and every second Saturday at 8 AM in the Ackert/Durland parking lot on the KSU campus. We will carpool to a local birding hotspot and should return by about 11 AM. Birders of every age and interest level are welcomed. Children are especially encouraged to attend. Call Dave Rintoul, 532-6663 or e-mail him at drintoul@ksu.edu for more information.

January Program:

KANSAS WILDLIFE
Gerald Wiens

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CONTRIBUTORS

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UPCOMING DATES:

- Jan. 6 - Eagle Day 9:00 AM
Tuttle Creek/Corps of
Engineers Visitor Cntr.**
- Jan. 13 - Sat. 8 AM
BEGINNING BIRDING
Ackert/Durland parking lot**
- Jan. 17 - Wed. 5:45 PM Dinner
7:30 PM "Kansas
Wildlife," Gerald Wiens
1014 Throckmorton, KSU
NE corner Denison/Claflin**
- Jan. 27 - Monthly Campout
Call 539-1956**

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Sixty-three intrepid bird counters braved the wind, cold, and snow flurries on Saturday Dec. 16 for the 52nd annual Manhattan Christmas Bird Census (CBC). Afterward they gathered for a delicious chili dinner and compiled the numbers of species seen that day. Despite the bitter cold and the serious threat of frostbite if one stayed outdoors too long that day, the final tally was quite respectable. The Manhattan CBC species total for the day was 88, and the number of birds censused was nearly 43,000 individuals. The species total is higher than the unofficial totals reported for the other two big CBC efforts in the state; Wichita and Lawrence, both done on the same blustery day, recorded 84 and 80 species respectively. So congratulations to our local birders for braving the elements and finding the most species of any CBC in the state again this year.

Additional species recorded for the count week (three days before or three days after the count day) are Western Grebe, Ross's Goose, Lesser Scaup, Loggerhead Shrike, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, and Snow Bunting. The Eastern Towhee is a new species for our count, and the Snow Bunting had only been seen on two previous counts in the 52 year history of the Manhattan CBC. Loggerhead Shrikes have not been on the list even as a count week species since 1995, so it was good to see that at least one shrike is here this winter. Other highlights included a new high total for Greater White-fronted Goose (37), Hooded Merganser (124), Bald Eagle (139!), Savannah Sparrow (8), Fox Sparrow (7), and McCown's Longspur (50). McCown's Longspurs have only been seen on three prior Manhattan CBCs, in fact. Since the bad weather only preceded the count by

a few days, some lingering migrants (e.g., Hermit Thrush), were found, but in general most of the birds seen were, as might be expected, winter-hardy species. Several species of waterfowl (American White Pelican, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Duck) were in the area just a week before the count, but were among the missing on count day. And we missed finding a Northern Mockingbird, which had been seen on 76% of the prior counts in this circle.

There are still lots of Kansas CBCs left in late December and early January; for a complete list and compiler contact information see the KOS website (<http://ksbirds.org>). Thanks to all the counters, chili cooks, organizers, group leaders, and other NFHAS members who made the 2000 Manhattan CBC a great success. See you next year!

*© 2001 Dave Rintoul, Compiler,
Manhattan CBC*

Tuttle Creek Lake Eagle Day

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Meet at Tuttle Creek Visitor Center

This year's event, sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will have three presentations and a tour. At 9:00 AM Dan Mulhern, Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, will present a program that focuses on the nesting in and migration through Kansas of the Bald Eagle. At 9:30 AM the Sunset Zoo will present a live raptor program. And at 10:00 AM, Pat Silovsky, Milford Nature Center, will present a live bald eagle program. After the programs, at about 10:30 AM, will be an automobile tour through the areas below the dam to view bald eagles in the wild.

Steve Prockish, 785-539-8511

Additional Eagle Programs:

Mildford Lake - January 13 & 14
(785-238-5714)

Lawrence TBA
(785-843-7665)

Kanopolis Lake TBA
(785-546-2565)

Wilson Lake - February 9
(785-658-2551).



The world that will exist in 100 and 1,000 years will, unavoidably, be of human design, whether deliberate or haphazard. The principles that should guide this design must be based on science, much of it done only sketchily to date, and on ethics. Ethics should, among other things, apportion costs and benefits between individuals and society as a whole, and between current generations and all future generations. A sustainable world will require an ethic that is, ultimately, as incorporated into culture and as long lasting as a constitutional bill of rights or as religious commandments. The Earth will retain its most striking feature, its biodiversity, only if humans have the prescience to do so.

Tilman, D. (2000)
Causes, Consequences and Ethics of Biodiversity.
Nature 405: 208-211

The catalogs from nurseries begin to arrive this month. The plants that we buy could influence the kind of world that will exist 1,000 years from now. In Missouri, an alliance of conservationists and nursery owners promotes the purchase of native plants. The names of these nurseries are available from Grow Native!, P.O. Box 104671, Jefferson City, MO 65110-4571. The alliance also has an internet site (which is under construction but eventually you may access it by using Grow Native! as the keyword at <http://www.conservation.state.mo.us/>).

Celebrating the existence of native species in our gardens, hayfields, and woodlots could help to preserve the beauty of our tallgrass prairie and other habitats.

The co-evolved plants and animals in our native habitats may have much to teach us about living. I believe that the greatest beauty occurs in co-evolved species which have the longest shared evolutionary history. The acquisition of such beauty by the non-native plants will take longer than the time that I have left in my own life to appreciate it. These non-natives have no co-evolved enemies which would serve to control their populations and to limit their competition with the natives. Some experts recommend planting non-native trees on city streets, because native trees will not survive on those streets. Perhaps this is a warning that our streets are unhealthy environments, and we should modify them so that

natives will survive. Some experts recommend that non-natives should be planted for conservation purposes.

Our time may eventually become known as the dark ages of conservation. The science "... has been done only sketchily to date ..." MacArthur and Wilson's equilibrium theory of island biogeography is almost 40 years old, and E. O. Wilson, the surviving author, would be the first to admit that their theory was an oversimplification. However, there is a basic truth within their theory, in my opinion. There is an equilibrium number of species in an area. Additional species will cause extinctions. I suspect that the addition of species may become a major cause of extinction in our Midwestern habitats.

Every aspect of life is complex. There are no experts. Don't listen to me or anyone else. Examine the evidence. Think about it. Listen to your heart until you hear the song that is being sung all over the world by this incredible thing called life.

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THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN A CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS THIS WHITE, WHITE DECEMBER!

FYI: Submit Newsletter articles by 15th of month to Cindy Jeffrey, 128 Dole Hall, KSU, or 15850 Galilee Rd, Olsburg, KS 66520, or email to cinraney@ksu.edu MAILING: contact Carla Bishop 539-5129



Last month I proposed that gazing at the sky can lead to far-reaching considerations, including how the essence of a thing can change with its distance from something else. For example how my naked eyes see the stars as part of a sparkling yet tranquil setting, and how instruments, in effect getting closer, see fiery turmoil.

Perhaps Zeno, a couple of millennia ago, was gazing un-instrumented when he decided that the world was an illusion, and offered as proof his famous arrow that, speeding toward its target, had first to travel half the distance, then half the remaining distance, etc., etc., and thus could never complete its aim, there always being some half distance remaining, however small. If we point to the bleeding deer the arrow strikes, he would say we have been hoodwinked, as when we watch a magician saw his assistant into halves. And, after all, both arrow and deer would be illusions, because light coming from a real arrow and deer would never cover the last half distance to our eyes.

I'm told there's at least one way to resolve Zeno's paradox by scientific formula, but as a layman I'd simply say that at some point distances become so small they cease to be distances and become modes of contact, the way some poisons in varying doses can become curatives, and vice versa. And therefore, looking skyward, at some point distances become so huge that they cease to be distances and become instead modes of – tranquility? Or whatever...

Again, engaging in such wanderings is part of the risk one takes when out under the stars.

It seems a pretty safe bet, however, that all five of the naked-eye planets will be performing on stage through the Jan. 15th - Feb. 15th period, four of them spectacularly so. Only Mercury is a bit reserved, showing up noticeably in the southwestern twilight on Jan. 14th, then gradually becoming less obvious before disappearing after Feb. 8th.

But higher in the SW sky Venus is a vigorous jewel in the twilight growing ever a little

higher and brighter through the period. Bob Berman, in *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, enjoys telling us that the planet's wickedly acidic atmosphere reflects 76% of the sun's light, and as it moves toward a 30 degree elevation it will be at its best angle for reflecting toward us, and become as close as it gets, a circumstance for super glow that occurs every eight years because Venus completes 13 revolutions of the Sun in the same time Earth does eight. And so we meet again.

Meanwhile Jupiter (to the left) and Saturn (to the right), both in bright phases, continue to enliven the small patch of space between Taurus' red eye, Aldebaran, and the Pleiades on his shoulder from twilight till dawn. they'll join with thick moon to let the Groundhog see his shadow at midnight on Feb. 2nd. Mars will be rising closer to 2 AM, and will seem pretty much by itself among the faint stars of Libra, though it will join the bright lights of Scorpio later in February.

The Moon will be new Jan. 24th, full Feb. 18th.

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**CONSERVATION
Karen A. Garrett****Web Resources for Conservation Activism**

A number of organizations make information available on the web for people who would like to participate in national conservation campaigns. Many of these sites make it very easy to contact your representatives, sometimes even supplying a letter that is faxed and/or e-mailed with the click of a button to the relevant politician or business leader. Probably it is better to personalize letters, though, especially if they are going to local representatives. Some sites also offer the option of signing up for e-mail alerts when new campaigns are started. Here are some examples of sites and the issues they are addressing with campaigns now.

National Audubon Society (www.audubon.org) - Campaigns against bills in the House of Representatives that would increase hunting on public lands and threaten cormorants.

Natural Resources Defense Council (www.nrdc.org) - Campaigns for protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and prevention of a new commercial airport on the edge of the Everglades.

Sierra Club (www.sierraclub.org) - Campaigns for protection of the ANWR and to end commercial logging on federal lands.

Wilderness Society (www.wilderness.org) - Campaigns for protection of the ANWR and for designation of other natural areas as national monuments.

Karen.A. Garrett



October Sales:

Seed - \$2,961.05

Donations - \$203.05

Store - \$88.00

It was another very pleasant and efficient October bird feed sale. Plenty of people were there to help unload the big order. There were new faces – John Tatarko and Pete Garfinkel. Walter Dodd returned to lend his strong back. Carla Bishop returned to rejoin our ranks, Master's Degree on the wall and dark memories of harried studying set aside – congratulations! Jan Garton, seed sale perennial, graced this activity with total competence again. And Tom Morgan appeared to fill orders after Beginning Birding was over. Marge Muenzenberger tended the Audubon store as she has for some time now. Another perennial put in a brief appearance, Leann Harrell. She was the person who introduced me to the seed sale as a helper when she was in charge. Then after a back injury she transitioned to cheer and refreshment provider. but alas, after many a fall, departs the swan, Leann is ready to turn over that role to whoever may be interested. This function definitely enhances the social dimension and ambience of our get together.

Amazingly, all of the seed was picked up and deliveries made thirty minutes before closing time. The start of the ill-fated OU-KSU football game spurred the pickup it seems. Now it is time to mention an effort to increase seed sales. National Audubon has all but cut off funds for our chapter. Somehow we must makeup this loss. The bird feed sale is our major fund raiser, our volume remains very consistent year after year. What we need is for many committed chapter members who feed birds but do not buy the seed from us to start doing so now. Weak memory is no excuse. We have delivery service for a minor fee. Also, if our much appreciated, faithful patronage would mention the sale to friends and neighbors who feed birds or are interested in doing so and encourage them to purchase from NFHAS it could make a significant difference. We cannot compete with Orscheln's but our cause is far superior to mainstream capitalism. Thanks to all, volunteers and patrons. May our number increase.

December Sales:

Seed - \$1,174.18

Donations - \$105.65

Store & Don - \$102.00

It was a chilly day with a light snow softly floating down most of the morning. How appropriate for the December Sale. I remembered when we used to have cold winters with blowing snow and snow plows. It brought a smile.

Again there were numerous volunteers to help unload the order: Hoagy Hoogheem, Chris Clowers, Paul Weidhaas, Madonna Stillman, and Carla Bishop. Jan Garton, at her UPS best (or worse) did the pointing and checking off. This sale provided what we have been hoping for, many new patrons – thank you, thank you, thank you.

Don Yockey appeared at 8:00 AM with more of his donated creations. This year we sold them, being needy of funds and raffled off a large hanging feeder which was won by the Hummels. Thanks again to Don. The chapter recruiter, Leann Harrell, was on hand once again with refreshments and affability. From now on, we might designate her as the tethered swan because we will not let her go. Carla took care of the deliveries. Marge Muenzenberger's Audubon Store did well at this Christmas sale.

There was a problem with the order – no super finch mix was shipped to us. Apologies to all who were inconvenienced. We need to be more rigorous on the cut off date for late orders, because faxing small additions increases the opportunity for error which translates into more work setting it all straight. Please try to order by the deadline. I know this is not an efficient setup, but we cannot figure any way of improving it.

Michael Rhodes



Northern Flint Hills
Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1932
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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. Renewals of membership 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.

Nonmembers may subscribe to the *PRAIRIE FALCON* newsletter for \$10 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

Kansas (statewide): 316-229-2777
Kansas City area (incl. W. MO): 785-342-2473
Nebraska (statewide): 402-292-5325

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Addresses & Phone numbers of Your Elected Representatives
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Write ✉ - or call ☎ (any-

Governor Bill Graves: 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 Bill Clinton, 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/>