



the prairie falcon

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October PROGRAM
Oct. 17
7:30PM

“Wild Animals & Settlers in Kansas”
Gene Fleharty

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

Wild Animals & Settlers in Kansas 1860-1880 Gene Fleharty

I was born in Pennsylvania, grew up in southern Nebraska and went to all schools in Hastings. Graduated from Hastings College with a BA in Biology and Math in 1956; awarded MS degree in Biology from Univ. of New Mexico in Albuquerque in 1958; earned PhD from same institution in 1963. Taught for two years at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln from 1960-1962. Came to Fort Hays State University in 1962, taught mammalogy, ecology, Intro zoology and a variety of other courses, retired in 1999 after teaching for 37 years.

During my tenure at Fort Hays, I published over 50 scientific articles, four books, a chapter in a couple of other books, and was the major professor for 57 MS students. Of these about half continued with their education and received doctorates from a variety of universities. I served as Chairman of the department from 1979-1990. I received the President’s Distinguished Scholar Award in 1990, the Pilot Award for outstanding teaching in 1991, I was awarded the Service Award and Research Award from the universities College of Health and Life Sciences, the Outstanding Educator Award from the Southwestern Association of Naturalists in 1994, and the Distinguished Service Award from the Alumni Association in 2001. I serve on the executive board of the Endowment Association and was the Chairman of the Environmental Concerns Committee for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment during the Hayden Administration.

My wife and I have two children, Chris and Debra and four grandchildren. My hobbies consist of reading, playing bridge, wood carving (decorative decoys and other birds), fishing, and exercising. I enjoy being a spectator at all kinds of athletic events. I think that’s enough about me. This is beginning to sound too much like an obituary!

Before each program, we invite our speakers to join us for an informal dinner and discussion. Feel free to join us this month at Texas Star Cafe 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. All meetings are open to the public.

Field Trips

BEGINNING BIRDWATCHING WALK

Join us Saturday, Oct. 13th 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.

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CONTRIBUTORS:

- PETE COHEN
- JAN GARTON
- THOMAS MORGAN
- DAVE RINTOUL

UPCOMING DATES:

- Oct 6 Bird Feed ORDER Deadline**
- Oct 13 Beginning Birding 8 AM Ackert Parking Lot**
- Oct 14 Tour NFHAS Local Outdoor Projects, 1:00 PM**
B.O.E. Parking Lot (Stagg Hill Rd & Allison) Call 776-9593
- Oct 17 Wed. 5:45 PM DINNER 7:30 PM - PROGRAM 1014 Throckmorton, KSU NE corner Denison/Claflin**
- Oct 20 Bird Feed PICKIUP 9 AM - 1:00 PM UFM 1221 Thurston**

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MANHATTAN, KS



OCTOBER BIRDING

DAVE RINTOUL

*At the instant the solitary croak
of a south-cruising Canada goose
unflaps itself out of the cold
and launches its cry over these
thousand acres, a single oak leaf
reaches its perfect rust-colored pitch
and rises into lightness. And the silence its
rising and pitch is made of
meets and transposes the kingdom-
making note of the disappearing bird.*

From "Toward a Theory of
Harmonics", a poem by Ralph Black,
in *Turning Over the Earth*, 2000,
published by Milkweed Editions,
Minneapolis MN

October is jammed with these harmonic instants. Acorns falling to feed ever-expanding squirrels until next spring. Dragonflies dying in the gullets of prairie gulls passing through on the way to the Gulf of Mexico. Life giving up, for the season, its riches, in order to nourish the hopes of a season to come, a season past the fog and ice and tiny days of winter. October is the best month of all for those who favor irony and bittersweet. And it is a good month to be outdoors, to see both the grand spectacles of migration and the microscopic miracles of death and repose.

Sparrows arrive in Kansas this month. And sparrows, though regarded by most as dun birds of dubious worth, are simply gorgeous. Kansas native and KU grad Jim Rising has published a field guide devoted completely to the sparrows, soon to come out in a second edition, and he points out that sparrows are an identification challenge as well as an aesthetic pursuit. The problems they present for the beginning birdwatcher are manifold. Sparrows are, for the most part, furtive and difficult to study

at your leisure. They are also mostly brown, and brown is not a color that most birders deem attractive. But a white-throated sparrow, with resplendent eyebrow and flashy lores the color of scrambled eggs, is unforgettable if properly seen. The harlequin face of our summer-resident lark sparrows has been described more than once as "too pretty to be a sparrow." A Harris' sparrow, with black bib and portly stature, seems to be dressed as if for a state dinner. Lincoln's sparrows seem to be pin-striped gentlemen and ladies, delicately moving into the light and back again into the shadows before you can adequately appreciate their beauty. Vesper sparrows, LeConte's sparrows, fox sparrows and many other elegant members of this tribe will pass through here this month. You will miss them, and the irony of their subtle beauty, unless you get out and look. Kansas and Missouri are excellent places to learn about sparrows, both the migratory species and the winter or summer residents. But first you have to get outdoors and patiently stalk them, cajole them into sight, and when you do you will be hooked on them too.

Flashier birds, less of an identification challenge than sparrows, also put in an appearance in the state

this month. Waterfowl migration escalates in October, and literally millions of ducks and geese will pass through our dwindling marshlands this month. Most of the drakes pose no challenge to even a mid-level birdwatcher, but the hens are subtle beauties, and often are best identified by their associations with a male consort. And occasionally an unidentifiable bird appears, the hybrid offspring of some wild northern union, giving rise to much unsupported speculation about their lineage. These are often once-in-a-lifetime sightings, and some can be spectacularly beautiful. Again, however, you need to be out there to find them, and to appreciate the multiple twists and turns of the DNA as expressed in these novel combinations.

So in these times of terror and uncertainty in the skies and on the land, it is appropriate that we find the harmonics in our migrant birds. They can teach us a lot about living gently on the planet, a lot about beauty, a lot about how much things change and how much they remain the same. We need to find resonance with these other species; it will surely help us find a much-needed resonance with our own kind.





In a symposium held in her honor today at the Ecological Society of America conference here, University of Minnesota paleoecologist Margaret B. Davis warned that some trees may not meet the challenge of adapting to rapid changes in temperature and moisture.” by Anne Jacobson, 7 August 2001 BioMedNet News

The range of the Scotch pine tree moved northward at a rate of 100 miles per century at the end of the last ice age. The ranges of some trees may need to move at a rate of 200 to 300 miles per century, however, during the current global warming.

To slow down global warming, I can only make decisions that are consistent with my personality. For example, I got 56 mpg during my trip to Minnesota in 1999. But I haven't applied for sainthood, and so far I haven't given up eating beans and contributing greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. So don't think that I've got a holier than thou attitude. I'm simply fond of pinching pennies.

Like all boys, when I was small, I watched my father's behavior carefully. He always compared prices before purchasing anything. I also noticed that he didn't steal, didn't beg, didn't gamble, and didn't try to get rich at the expense of others. He paid his own way, and that became my definition of what it meant to be a man.

When coal is burned at a new power plant, it costs about 4 pennies/kWh. The total cost is 6 to 8 pennies/kWh, however, when we include some of the costs of human diseases and environmental damages that result from mining and burning that coal. In my opinion, when I

purchase the electricity, I'm living off the unpaid costs of the damages. Almost any type of purchase has hidden costs, and establishing methods for paying for these costs is typically the responsibility of government.

My father and I have different opinions about these issues as well as others. A son is not a clone of his father. Differences are valuable, because to be alive, each of us must be uniquely ourselves. I have no reservations in my respect for him, because my basic values came from him. When I come to the end of my role on this earth, I want to know that I've paid my own way.

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FIELD TRIP - LOCAL NFHAS PROJECTS

Sunday, Oct. 14, 1:00PM

Tour of the Northern Flinthills Audubon Society's local outdoor projects (i.e., butterfly garden, Northeast Park, Michel-Ross Audubon Preserve). Explore natural areas that exist in and near Manhattan. Persistent effort and dollars from our dedicated membership create, nurture and preserve these areas. Project leaders will be available for questions. Meet at B.O.E. parking lot (nearest intersection is Stagg Hill Rd. and Allison). Questions? Call Patricia Yeager 776-9593

SPECIAL FUNDRAISER OFFER FOR OCTOBER

Shadowsmith Photographics Inc. is donating session fee of \$15 from any portrait session purchased by NFHAS members this October. Please contact Shadowsmith if you are interested in this service. Times and availability are limited.

Portrait Options
Family
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Last month I offered two possible interpretations of the performance enacted by the stars of the Big Dipper every night that the cloud curtain rises. Now, with the guidance of Lloyd Metz and Carol Nathanson's book, *Constellations*, and Bob Berman's *Secrets of the Night Sky*, let's go meet the cast, calling them by their shortened Arabic names.

At the far end of the bowl is **Dubhe** (Dubby); then clockwise, **Merak**, **Phecda**, and **Megrez** at the junction of bowl and handle. Since the Dipper also forms the right hindquarters of the Great Bear, their names mean "Back of the Bear," "Loin," "Thigh," and "Root of the Tail." **Megrez's** Chinese name, *Tien Kuen*, means Heavenly Authority, suggesting that at one time it shone brighter than now.

Outward on the handle are **Alioth**, **Mizar** with tiny **Alcor** close beside, then **Alkaid**. **Alioth's** name apparently is some metaphorical reference to whiteness; its spectrum indicates a surprising amount of chromium. Originally it was designated

the Epsilon star – fifth brightest – but now shines brighter than the Alpha designate, **Dubhe**. **Mizar** apparently means girdle (midway on the handle), and **Alcor** designates a Forgotten, or Abandoned One. Bob Berman says **Alkaid** means leader, despite its tail-end position. But Metz and Nathanson say it translates as chief mourner, from another story in which the Dipper's bowl becomes a bier.

Mizar and **Alcor**, often also known as the Horse and Rider, once found employment as one of the Earth's earliest eye charts; if you could see both with the naked eye you could enlist, get your camel-driving license, or whatever. In fact there's more there than meets the naked eye, a complex system of mutually rotating stars only instruments can detect but anyone can love, at a distance – about 80 million light years. **Alkaid** – Metz and Nathanson reveal – is over 225 light years distant, but coming closer at almost seven miles a second. **Dubhe** and **Merak** have found job security as the most popular guides pointing toward the North Star, with **Dubhe** the

closer. (A position distinct from that of baseball relief pitchers who become known as closers.)

In the rest of the sky, I'm told Mercury will be at its morning best the last days of October and first week of November, particularly close to Venus on October 29th. *The Old Farmer's Almanac* claims the Orionid meteor shower after moonset on the 22nd will be "mediocre" and suggests you take an evening look for our galaxy's dense center, marked by a glow in Sagittarius just to the right of Mars in the SW.

Saturn has come into the early evening sky, about the same yellowish color and brightness as Capella, far to the left in Auriga the Charioteer. Jupiter rises later.

Now, as to the Moon. Call it new October 16th and November 15th. But when it will be full depends on your persuasion. *The Old Farmer's Almanac* says November 1st, at 00:41 AM. Other sources, I guess taking a more general view, give it to October 31st, thus creating a Blue Moon, the second full moon in any calendar month. Your move.

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Zimmerman Concert Fund Raiser - HUGE Success

The Ann Zimmerman benefit concert for the NFHAS Land Preservation Fund nearly filled the Manhattan Arts Center with enthusiastic fans on September 14, and helped raise over \$1,500! And thanks to an anonymous donor, \$1,000 of that will be matched on a 2 to 1 basis, adding another \$2,000 to the final total. Thanks to all who attended, to those who participated in the silent auction, but especially to the following: Ann Zimmerman, of course, who donated her talents, time, mileage and good will – you are great!

David Kamerer, who tied us into the Birdhouse Concert network, did an absolutely fantastic job of publicizing the event in fliers and in the newspapers; Penny Sentfen and Steve Galitzer of the MAC for managing the house, opening, closing, helping with tickets, etc.; Gretchen Holden for taking care of the box office for the concert; Chad Fonfara, for donating his time to run the lights; The Dusty Bookshelf and Claflin Books for handling off-site ticket sales; Ann Carter for donating two of her works of art for the silent auction, raising \$225 for us; Urban Designs for framing Ann's prints at no cost;

And Don Yockey, our own "birdhouse artist" who donated five nest boxes and four magnificent feeders, raising \$232.50 for the cause.

Thanks, too, to NFHAS members Paul Weidhaas who organized the event and delivered auction winnings to their successful bidders; Ann Feyerharm, Leann Harrell and John Tatarko for their contributions before and during the concert. This event moves us a lot closer to our goal of putting a conservation easement on the Michel-Ross Audubon Preserve once we get all of the property deeded to us. Thanks again everyone!!!
Jan Garton



THANK YOU to all those who volunteer to be on the BOARD and committees!!!!

Leann Harrell

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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



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Subscription Informtion:

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 \$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.

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