

## SANDHILL CRANE SPRING MIGRATION

I have been to see the cranes at least five times and would be glad to go, again. IF we want to go, we need to make reservations well in advance AND pay for the viewing blinds at the time we make the reservations. The weekend of March 24 is the Crane Festival and interested folks could attend that one on their own, but the cost is substantial. [Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival](#)

If someone(s) are interested in going as a separate group, they could contact me for details. My preferred weekend if they go with me would be **Friday, March 15 returning Sunday, March 17.**

They need to **contact me no later than January 18** so that we can make reservations to be assured a place in the viewing blinds for our specific dates. [Sandhill Crane Viewing at Rowe Sanctuary](#)

A few details for a trip with me. It is 240 miles to Kearney, NE to be driven on Friday leaving by 8:30 a.m. with some bird viewing stops along the way, Friday evening in the blind (\$35 per person paid at time of reservation), overnight in Kearney about \$80 for a motel room (single or double). Saturday in Kearney area for crane viewing in the area and/or sightseeing, second overnight at motel.

Sunday up early for morning viewing from the blind (\$35 per person again), back to motel for breakfast, and then return trip to Manhattan with some more bird viewing along the way arriving back to Manhattan by around 6 p.m.

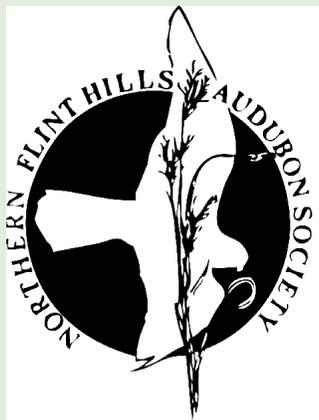
Total cost for a vehicle with me is \$100. With ridesharing for four in my vehicle the cost of transportation will be about \$25 per person.

Preferred **contact for me is koellik@sbcglobal.net, 785-776-4915.**

Jim Koelliker



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



## prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 47, No. 5 ~ January 2019

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### Upcoming Events

Jan. 5- Eagle Day (pg. 5)

Jan. 7- Board Meeting 6 p.m. Friend's Room,  
Manhattan Public Library

Jan 12- Sat. Morning Birding  
8 a.m. Sojourner Truth Park

Feb. 4 - Board Meeting 6 p.m. Friend's Room,  
Manhattan Public Library

Feb. 13- Namibia and conservation in the Plains  
by Ryan Klataske Manhattan Public Library



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

January, it may be remembered, came into being by regal fiat in early Roman times, helping to fill an unnamed winter gap in their calendar, and becoming the start of the calendar year with a name derived from “*ianua*”, their word for “gate”, something that looked forward and backward. And with the presence of women in the election just past having at a notable increase, it may be interesting to take a brief look back at the approach of that situation, leaving looking forward to other commentators.

My general education has me believing that women have had leading governing roles going away back, though it seems they were either part of some royal establishment or of some matriarchal culture. Being elected to such positions seems relatively modern.

In 1848 a group of women sailed across the Atlantic to participate in one of the peace conferences that were held around Europe during that decade and a little past. Their reaction to being refused entry because they were women had something to do with the organizing of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention that, one might say, sent the suffragette movement sailing forth.

One lady active in the movement was Ellen Clark Sargent, whose husband, California Senator Aaron Augustus Sargent, in 1878 first proposed in Congress that action be taken to produce a Constitutional amendment that would read: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation”. Such a proposal was introduced every year following until the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920.

By then eight western states had already granted woman suffrage: Wyo. '1869, Colo. '93, Utah and Ida. '96, Wash. and Cal. 1910, Ore. and Ariz. '12. When Ellen died in 1911 San Francisco held a large public memorial, its first for a woman, and California flags flew at half-mast.

In 1925 Nellie Tayloe Ross, who went to high school in Miltonvale, Kansas, west of Junction City, became the first female governor of any state, winning an election in Wyoming to succeed her husband (who had died of a failed appendectomy) without doing any campaigning. She sought re-election in the same manner (for what reason I haven't found out) and was defeated.

Meanwhile Meriam A. Ferguson, of Texas, had become the second female governor, taking office two weeks after Nellie, compared to whom I believe she was quite a contrast. Mrs. Ferguson's husband, James Edward, had been impeached and removed as Texas' governor in 1917. Then, seven years later, as factional turbulence continued, “Ma Ferguson” ran and won on the promise that she would govern exactly as her husband wished.

The first woman to win a governorship without being the wife or widow of a former governor, was Ellen T. Grasso, of Connecticut, in 1974.

Whatever their current successes in U.S. politics, females do have a presence in the January sky. They constitute half of the six circumpolar constellations that are above us all day and all night throughout the year, in repeating orientations, though invisible whenever the so much brighter Sun is shining.

There's Cassiopeia, Queen of the Sky, who is veiled by the Milky Way so that we easily see only her rocking chair throne. And there are the Big and Little Bears, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor (if they were male, they would be “Ursus”). Ursa Minor, whose tail tip is the North Star, is one and the same as the Little Dipper. But when viewing Ursa Major people generally focus on her hindquarter and tail where her stars provide the Big Dipper.

The rest of the evening sky's stellar performers are basically male, including the northern home-plate shape of Auriga the Charioteer, despite his name ending in 'a'. His bright star, Capella, travels just west of a faint NE-SW zig-zag line of stars known as the Lynx whose sex is undesignated. Johannes Helvelius, the astronomer who gave the name, did not figure those stars resembled a large cat, but required “lynx-eyes” to be seen.

As to planet displays, January begins with the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, and Mercury aligned in the pre-dawn eastern sky the 1st-3rd, with the Moon shifting its position each night, and Venus shining her brightest for the year. She and Jupiter will be sailing close together the 20th-26th, while Mars will spend the month setting westward in Pisces during the late evenings.

The Moon will become technically full at 11p16 the 20th while it is being eclipsed, starting at 9p34 with totality at 10p41. It will be new the 5th at 7p28.

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## The Social Event of the Year\*

(dedicated to John Zimmerman,  
Mike Donnelly and Clyde Ferguson)

December's on hand  
and folks start to plan  
to count winter birds  
that settle in our land.  
The Northern Flint Hills province  
will prove to be diverse  
in species not adverse  
to prairie gleanings sown  
in summer's garden grown

Six intrepid leaders  
will guide folks afield  
to river, woods and grassland,  
wild habitats that yield  
a wide diversity of feathered friends  
on limb and turf and sand.  
Ducks and gulls and geese,  
songbirds, raptors, game;  
lots to note and name.

From dawn to dusk  
they'll trek the land  
then come to share their numbers  
Partake of food and company  
and argue over authenticity  
Be awed by one rare sighting,  
compare with years gone by  
be content with this year's showing  
then home to well-earned slumbers.

Kevin Fay opened the door to the senior center at 5 p.m. as the skies darkened and the sun sunk from sight behind the buildings in Manhattan. He was in a zone of purposefulness as pots of chili and soup, a coffeemaker, bags of bowls and cups and napkins were lugged inside. Wanting the gathering to go smoothly, he, not mincing words, directed the few volunteers to preordained spots for the repast. Folks began drifting in - around twenty for a final count - and migrated to chat with friends, fellow birders. We sat with Ruth and Duane Kerr (past president of NFHAS), the latter sampling one of my cinnamon buns as he offered droll comments on the state of the world. Promptly at six Kevin in a rich baritone welcomed everyone and we dug in. I read a hastily written homage entitled "The Social Event of the Year" (the CBC so named by dear old curmudgeon John Zimmerman years ago). \*

Mark Mayfield, the coordinator, a mild-mannered and quiet-spoken professor, asked if we were ready to tally. Three tables' spokespersons - Patricia Yeager, Ed Pembleton, and Doris Burnett - had split the remaining three sectors among themselves so the count for all six sectors was ready to go. A total of 88 species had been sighted (one questionable bird was discounted because a full description was not forthcoming). Clyde Ferguson - who had led a group for decades- and members of his family- Maria, his daughter and Roma, his cousin from Wisconsin- drove all the way from Oklahoma to attend the count! (Mike Donnelly, another stalwart, was in Croatia). Joe Haus shared a story with me from a past count about a ruby-crowned kinglet they had found dead that Dick Marzolf challenged the sighting of: It was whipped out of a pocket where it had been secreted and tossed on the table in front of Zimmerman! I think they counted it.

We talked about possible reasons why attendance was sparse, realizing that this is the time of year when all were especially busy and stressed, that we were competing with a home basketball game and bowl football games, that it was difficult to dedicate a full day to birding, especially if young and possessing a family. But maybe a family's time would be better spent and more memorable if the day were spent outdoors - the weather was cooperative this year - with binoculars and at least one agreeably knowledgeable companion, walking and looking and, perhaps, seeing something that they hadn't seen before. My friend Sil said she was especially pleased at seeing two coyotes! A sense of wonder, written about eloquently by Rachel Carson, is what this season is really about, and while folks may not have time for a full day of being afield, a few hours might be enough to discover something wonderful or something new. As for Kevin, that was the first pot of coffee he had ever made (his "something new"), and it was really good. Thanks to him and everyone who engaged in the NFHAS Christmas Bird Count. Maybe next year, each of us will invite a family to come with us and maybe experience a sense of wonder. Hope for good weather!

# Manhattan Christmas Bird Count

Mark Mayfield

The Manhattan CBC took place on the 15th of December on a pleasant bluebird day. This weather can mean many things for birding but in my experience, birds are harder to see in the bright sun, and not as visible throughout the day. It may also keep birds less active through the middle part of the day. So, here are the numbers and these are unofficial!

There were 43 individuals in 22 parties that birded 62 hours (468 miles) by car and 42 hours (43 miles) on foot. We had 5 feeder counts (13.7 hours) and a total of 2:18 hrs and 10 miles owling.

The total of species was 88, with a total individual count of 23,465.

So, numbers were low but that can mostly be accounted for by low number of Snow Geese (3790, vs. median 32,117 since 2010). Many report that sparrows seem to be low, that wasn't my experience where I birded even though Tree Sparrow numbers were overall lower than normal (376 vs. median of 949 over 70yrs).

There were no real rarities, but it was nice to get 4 Pied-Bill Grebes, a Bewick's Wren, Field Sparrow, and 60 Rusty Blackbirds. We did miss some regulars, including Golden Crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Screech Owl, L. Scaup, Common Grackle, and Mockingbird. Near misses included totals of 1 Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Merlin, Killdeer, and Fox sparrow; 2 individuals of Pheasant, Red-headed WP, Cowbird, P. Siskin, P. Finch, Spotted Towhee, Ring-necked Duck, Pintail and Snipe.

Mark Mayfield



During the Manhattan Christmas Bird Count, Dave Rintoul took this photo of a red-shouldered Hawk. Later, when he looked at the photo unbeknownst to him at the time, the hawk had flushed a snipe!

# A night out with the owls

Patricia Yeager

Our November evening listening gathering at Carnahan Creek was quieter than expected but it was likely the calm before the storm as it was later that night that the blizzard came through.

We warmed ourselves around a campfire and enjoyed hot dogs, smores, and each other's company while listening for wild sounds. We heard a Barred Owl and the coyotes were howling up quite a tune for us.

Later we successfully called up a Screech owl. Like the wild creatures, we then went home to hunker down for the storm.

Lost and found: A nice little flashlight on a cord was found at the campfire. Also, a black glove. Contact Patricia [pyeagerbirder@gmail.com](mailto:pyeagerbirder@gmail.com)



## Tuttle Creek Eagle Day, Saturday, January 5, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers event begins at the fire station located on the corner of Denison and Kimball Avenues in Manhattan.

The day will start with presentations from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Milford Nature Center including an up close look at some live native birds of prey. The day will end with an eagle watching tour at Tuttle Creek Lake. Winter eagle watching is particularly spectacular and January is an ideal time to view these magnificent birds.



*Photo by Dave Rintoul*



When recycling at Howie's remember that if you are depositing aluminum cans, Howie will donate to the Flint Hills Audubon Society- but you must go into the office and tell them.



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Published monthly (except August) by the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.  
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Also available online at [nfhas.org](http://nfhas.org)

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PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

The Board meets on the first Monday of each month. The meetings usually last about an hour.

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- Secretary**
- Treasurer**
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