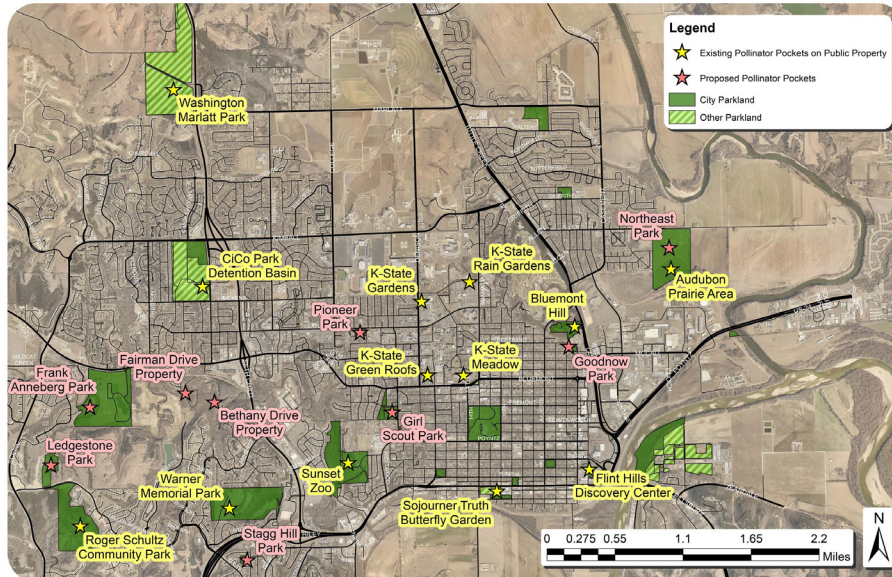


# MANHATTAN POLLINATOR POCKETS INITIATIVE

<https://www.mhkprd.com/500/Pollinator-Pockets>

## Manhattan Parks and Recreation Pollinator Pockets



Let Manhattan Parks and Recreation know how much you appreciate these pockets of pollinations, and encourage them to create more. Go to the website and you can see where they hope to have more places designed for pollinators.

**Contact within the Manhattan Parks Dept is Alfonso Leyva  
November 2nd at 4:30 pm in the City Commission room at City Hall.**

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



## prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

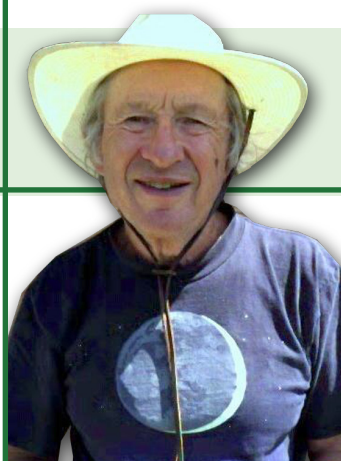
Vol. 49, No. 3, November 2020

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Concept of Completeness  
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and answers to puzzle #2

### Upcoming Events

- Nov. 3 - TUESDAY Board Meeting- 6:00 pm,  
contact a board member if interested
- Nov. 15-16 Birdseed pickup reminder  
see page 5
- Save the Dates: (More info in Dec. PF)  
Olsburg CBC- Dec. 12th  
Manhattan CBC Dec. 19th  
Wakefield (Milford)- Dec. 20th  
Junction City CBC- Dec. 27th



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

The fate of the 237th edition of this column is to have to deal with November 2020. In his play, "Julius Caesar", Shakespeare has Brutus begin a speech by saying, "There are tides in the affairs of man...", and now it seems clear that this November will include two big ones. The U.S. election will crest and pass on, very likely engendering much debate about whence it came and whither it is going. Because this has to be written in advance I have no idea about what phase the tide of the Covid-19 will be in. Yet I feel it would be irresponsible journalism not to record the presence of both phenomena, though they are each beyond the reach of this column's considerations.

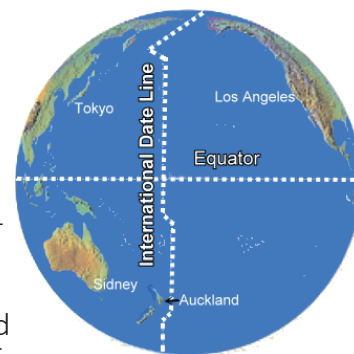
So alternatively we can follow the lead of Lewis Carroll's Walrus in "Through the Looking Glass" and "...talk of other things. Of shoes and sailing ships—and sealing wax— Of cabbages—and kings— and why the sea is boiling hot—and whether pigs have wings".

Also we can grumble along with Thomas Hood's 1844 poem entitled "No".

No sun — no moon!  
No morn — no noon —  
No dawn — no dusk — no proper time of day.  
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,  
No comfortable feel in any member —  
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,  
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds! —  
November!

Or we can be glad that, while Flint Hills Novembers can have nasty days, Mr. Hood's outlook is scarcely a fit. (Parenthetically one can find a much longer 2011 poem titled "November" by Ted Hughes, that I find deals opaquely with a tramp discovered asleep beside a flooded ditch).

On November 28th we can recognize the 500th anniversary of the traverse from the Atlantic to the Pacific of Ferdinand Magellan's expedition through the straits that retain his name. The survivors completed a trip around the world and we can imagine their surprise when on reaching the Canary Islands on what their three years of careful record keeping said would be Wednesday, July 9, 1522, they were told it was locally Thursday, July 10th. Thus they unwittingly confirmed what was earlier only speculation concerning what would happen date-wise when one traveled westward across an imaginary line half way around the Earth. (The International Date Line became official in 1884.) They were also one of the beginning waves that led to the global tide of European exploration, of which we are inheritors.



The sky show will seem somewhat prosaic after this past summer's, with Mars still aloft till the wee hours, but dimming. Jupiter will be catching up toward Saturn but both going down early in the evenings with Sagittarius, the Moon joining in the 18th and 19th. Venus will be bright in the eastern dawn while not appearing till closer and closer to sunrise. Mercury will be available just ahead of the Sun from the 8th till 18th, for those with a low horizon.

To add a little vim try locating the star called Algol in the constellation Perseus. This refers to a heroic young man in Greek mythology but is a group of stars, bright in the Milky Way, more resembling a child's tricycle close to and trailing behind Cassiopeia. Algol is nominally the second brightest of the group, but has a circling companion that, blocking its shine, causes it to dim away and return on a cycle of two days, 20 hours, 48 minutes, and 56 seconds. Spying its performance could engender other conversation. It apparently did among the ancients, for its Arabic name is 'Al Ra's al Ghul', meaning "Demon's Head", which has evolved into 'Algol'. (See, for one, "A Skywatcher's Year" by Jeff Kanipe, Cambridge, 1999).

The Moon will be new the 15th at 11a07, and full the 30th at 4a30.

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## Dark Diversity and the Concept of “Completeness”

Dru Clarke



Behind the local high school, a thick deciduous woodland covers a steep slope on the east bank of Wildcat Creek as it runs north-south from Poyntz Avenue toward Fort Riley Boulevard. For years my Field Ecology class took counts and measurements of both a reach of the creek and random quadrats (10 x10 m squares) of the woodland, determining the creek's health and, ultimately, the richness of the adjacent woodland. Even the most reluctant outdoorsy student eventually came around as they began to appreciate the grandeur and peaceful atmosphere of the trees (with the added benefit of toning their leg muscles negotiating the steepness of the slope.) By some formula of using the number of individual species and the frequency of each species we discovered a crude estimate of how 'rich' the woody ecosystem was. I just learned from reading Annie Proulx's *Barkskins* that this is also called 'completeness.'

What was puzzling was the distribution of certain plants, notably the rare, true Solomon's Seal (a lily-like forb with paired bell-like ivory flowers arranged along the stem) and Western Buckeye, an exuberantly flowering tree. Had our tossed meter stick landed among the buckeyes that seemed to cluster on the upper slope, our results would have been vastly different. And, while we didn't count the forbs, we knew from year to year where to find the Solomon's Seal although conditions on the slope appeared to be uniform throughout. Or, were there unseen forces, conditions that we could not discern? Was the ecosystem 'complete' and were our measurements affirming that conclusion?

Centuries ago native peoples built log structures (archeologists have confirmed this) in this and other wooded areas in the tributaries of and on the banks of the Kansas River. The trees they selected and cut may have altered the overall makeup of the woodland, and the effect may have persisted into contemporary times. Plants harvested for their medicinal or food value may, too, have existed in greater abundance than today. Do we have 'dark diversity' at work here? \* And, discovering what used to be here that could possibly survive here again stimulates us to consider if, indeed, that - restoration or rewilding- should be encouraged. And, that makes us think of animals as well. Prairie wolves, big cats, bears, sloths, mammoths? Are you shivering yet?

Last year I noticed in our woodland behind the 'summer kitchen' (an old wooden shed with a chimney the earlier inhabitants used to cook in during the torrid summers) a spindly sapling that turned out to be a maple. Its leaves look just like those of the Norway maple that grew in our yard back east. There are no other maples on our land that we have found (they may be 'phantom species', there but not found) and at no time did we ever cast maple seeds about. I keep a watchful eye on it, hoping it will be able to compete with the black walnuts, oaks, and hackberry. Could the seed from which it sprung be a relict from a post-glacial environment? Part of the species of dark diversity? What could be here if conditions were 'right'? As it is, its presence seems absent in the rest of our woodland. Will its single presence even be felt?

At a recent meeting with ardent and dedicated prairie conservationists they talked a lot of 'management' and 'weeding,' lots of weeding. I grew more and more weak-kneed thinking of the backbreaking labor, the kneeling and yanking and sawing to maintain native prairie as we know it. A friend spends hours whacking invasive Asian honey-suckle and we do battle with *Sericea lespedeza*.

The tallgrass prairie is, at most, 12,000 years old, a mere youngster, as an ecosystem. Is it doomed as a result of our sloppiness, our mismanagement, our neglect, our greed? Or, will a changing climate determine its fate, despite our best intentions?

Years ago, a couple, the Poppers, from Rutgers (my alma mater!) advanced a plan to turn the Great Plains into a Buffalo Commons. They were ridiculed and threatened with bodily harm, even death, for having such effrontery in suggesting such a thing! Imagine a depopulated region, a broad corridor, stretching from the Canadian border to Mexico, left to the course of Nature, alive with wild and untamed beasts and untrammelled vegetation. An unlikely, although romantic, notion that. But, will a changing climate in its inexorable shapeshifting make us rethink how we live in the Great Plains?

Giant sloths ate the fruits of the Bois d'Arc, the osage orange tree, and it could be found growing where the sloths roamed. The extinction of the sloths limited where the trees naturally grew, and the hedgerows of today are manmade. We are the absent presence of the sloth.

The concept of 'completeness' changes as earthly conditions change. What we might do is care for our place as we know it, or want it to be. But that may depend on the presence of things we might not be aware of. As a local politician recently said, "We don't know what we don't know." I don't agree with her often, but to this, I do.

\* Dark diversity, the counterpart of observed diversity (what my students and I did), is the set of species that are absent from a study site but present in the surrounding region and able to inhabit particular ecological conditions. These species appear to have poorer dispersal properties (and, hence, are not evenly distributed).



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# Birding Crossword Puzzle #3

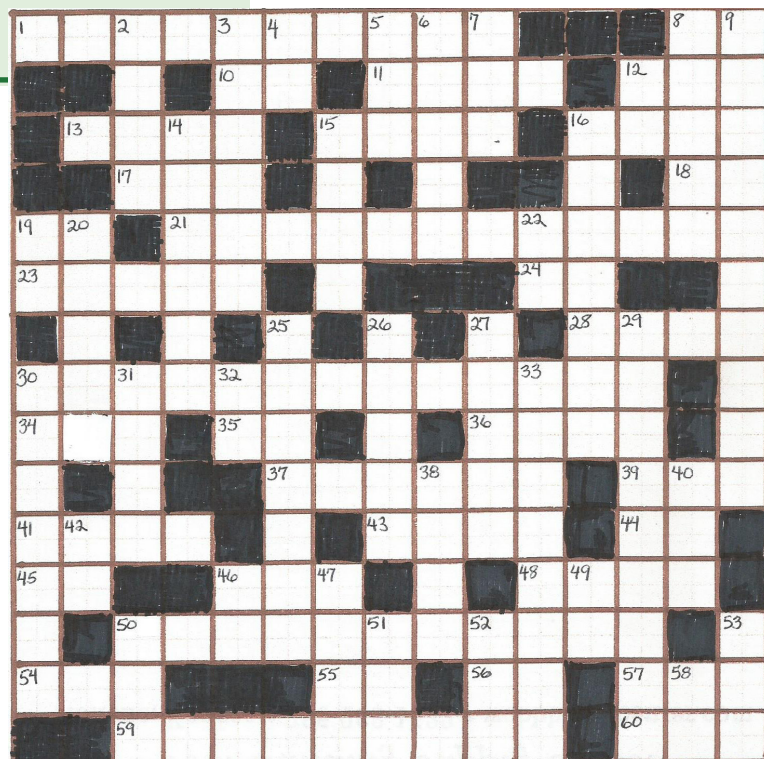
Patricia Yeager

## ACROSS:

1. Birder's aid
8. Puzzle maker
10. Height
11. Proverbial harvest
12. Often it is more accurate to ID a bird by what you hear rather than what you \_\_\_\_.
13. Alpha code for Indigo Bunting
15. Alpha code for Rufus-crowned sparrow
16. Poultry
17. Kansas birding and conservation organization
18. Elevation
19. Nevada
21. Sings midday as well as morning. Song ends on an up note.
23. McDowell Creek Rd south of I-70
24. Makes KS summers more pleasant
28. Bottom structure on a vessel
30. Long-tailed beauty that perches on fences
34. Chief executive officer
35. Year of our Lord
36. Homophone of Soar
37. Small warbler named for a North American ornithologist
39. Many Americans would like to lose these
41. Multicolored gem
43. Part of a handle
44. Wisconsin
45. Oregon
46. Convenient bank
48. Bird fuel
50. A Kansas Kite
54. Association known for setting auto standards
55. Nebraska
56. Element 44 of the periodic table
57. TV comedy that has lasted decades
59. S for short-tailed and saltwater, L for long-billed and Lake
60. Hog's home

## DOWN:

2. Columbus' ship
3. Western U.S. Game bird
4. Utah
5. Curve
6. Sap
7. Resin
8. Eastern and Western woodland bird



9. Greater and Lesser found on field and shore
14. Pleasant shady places
15. A gem
16. Bird named for it's under wing color
19. It is not clear (editor's abbr. Latin)
20. Songs and calls are to birds as \_\_\_\_\_ is to humans.
22. Virginia
25. Named for it's call, this wet meadow breeder has an upturned bill.
26. This sun worshiper has long pink legs and a thin straight bill.
27. Konza Prairie grazer
29. A high altitude European wildflower you have heard of
30. Groups of fish
31. IA
32. Subject to approval
33. White on sides of tail in grassy fields, meadows, prairies but are not Meadowlarks
38. I'm doing the best I can so don't give me any of this
40. Found in a bridled horse's mouth
42. Public relations
46. Local birding is a come \_\_\_\_ you are event.
47. Aggressive garden herb
49. Michigan land designation
50. Medicine
51. Division of land or time
52. Ireland
53. An annoying insect
58. Northern territory

## ALSOP UPDATE

# THANK YOU!

A big THANK YOU to the Konza Prairie Rotary for helping with winter clean up and bulb planting at the Alsop Bird Sanctuary.

## REMINDER:

## Birdseed PICKUP dates

Nov. 15 12n-4 pm

Nov. 16 9-12n

2041 Pillsbury Dr. (across the Highway 177 from the Piano Store. Stone house

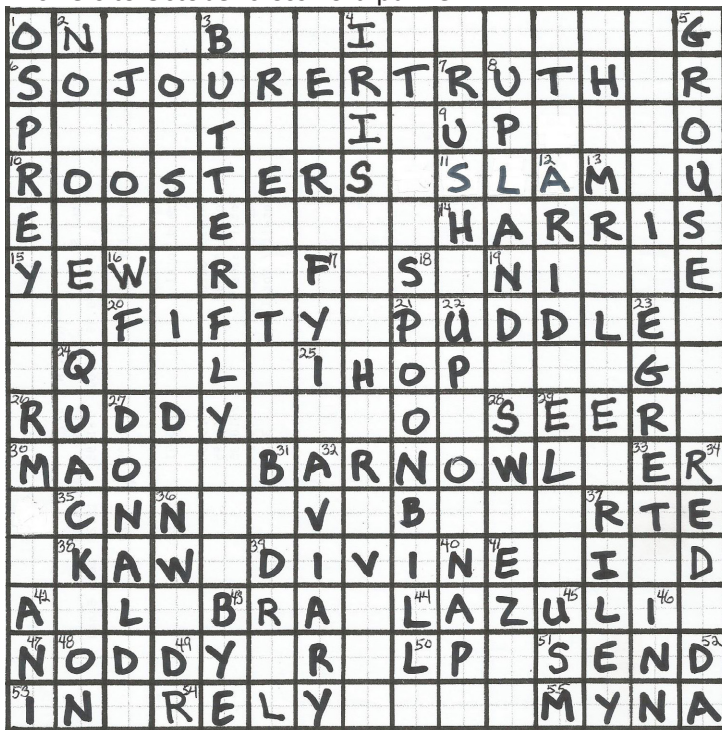
Drive through and we will load your car

## Migration - a wonderful time of year



*Sandhill Cranes, photo by Dave Rintoul*

## Answers to October crossword puzzle #2





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

Return Service Requested

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

The purpose of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society is to teach people to enjoy and respect birds and their habitats. NFHAS advocates preservation of prairie ecosystems and urban green spaces thus saving the lives of birds and enriching the lives of people.

Also available online at [nfhas.org](http://nfhas.org)

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Also available online at [nfhas.org](http://nfhas.org)

Membership Information: Introductory memberships- \$20/yr. then basic renewal membership is \$35/yr. When you join the National Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society. You will receive the bimonthly Audubon magazine in addition to the Prairie Falcon newsletter. New membership applications should be sent to National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society and include the code C4ZJ040Z. Questions about membership Call 1-800-274-4201 or email the National Audubon Society [join@audubon.org](mailto:join@audubon.org). Website is [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).

Subscription Information: If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in NFHAS 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, 66505-1932

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](mailto:list_serve@ksu.edu)> and join in the discussions.

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