

## *Annual Planning Meeting - June 27, 4 p.m.*

*Patricia Yeager's Home  
5614 Bayer's Hill, Lake Elbo  
Manhattan, KS 66502-8912*

### **OK - listen up!!**

We need you and your ideas. Please help us plan our chapter activities for the next year. What do you want to see? Hear? Do? Inquiring minds want to know. Come to our potluck, (always great food) and join in the discussions, or if you are too shy- just email one of the board members with your ideas.

## *Afternoon Birding trip to Alcove Spring, June 14*

Alcove Spring Preserve is a historical park of about 200 acres near Blue Rapids. It is also a great place to find birds. There are flat walking trails through a lovely meadow and some a little bit more difficult along the crystal clear creek to the spring.

**Bring** a sack lunch, water, bug spray, a lawn chair, field guides for wildflowers as well as bird guides.

**Meet** at 2:00 p.m. at old K-Mart parking lot (now Goodwill).

**Park** near the green ATM machine at corner of lot and we will carpool.

We will return by 8:30 p.m. (Rain cancels the trip)

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



## prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

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### **Upcoming Events**

**JUN 1 - Board Meeting 6 p.m.**  
Tom & MJ Morgan Home



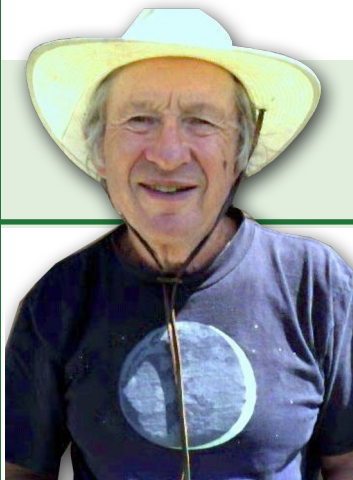
**JUN 13 - Saturday Morning Birding**  
8 a.m. Sojourner Truth Park

**JUN 14 - Alcove Spring Trip (see above)**

**JUN 27 - Yearly Planning meeting**  
see above



**JUL 15 -DEADLINE** for Memorial stones  
for Alsop walkway.  
\$100.00 contribution per carved stone.  
Please send donations to NFHAS P.O. Box 1932  
Manhattan, KS 66505 (two lines)



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

In 1885 a British humorist, Thomas Ansley Guthrie, published a novel titled “The Tinted Venus”, the eventual source of the 1943 musical and 1948 film, with the catchier title “One Touch of Venus”. (A engaged young man by impulse puts his intended fiancée’s engagement ring on the finger of a museum statue of a Venus who’s provided with arms; the statue comes alive, with resulting complications.)

We have had many engaging touches of Venus as the evening star this spring, and it’s only getting better. Circling within our orbit she will be farthest from the Sun (where we can get a good look at her) June 6th, but she’ll just keep getting brighter as we grow nearer each other. Being an inner planet we see phases of her, as we do of the Moon. And location, location, location, it’s nearness that counts. We’ll see only a sliver of her lit up when she appears at her brightest in July. Meanwhile (bear with me) I’ll sing a song of Venus:

As to Venus there’s nothing between us  
except the cosmos and atmosphere.  
And regarding the cosmos as a whole,  
We are less far apart than we are near.

Although she’s engaged in a lot of reflection  
I wonder if she’s really deep in thought;  
A “cream” of clouds provides her complexion,  
at least that’s what science now has taught

Her inner self hides ‘neath that veil of mist;  
She’s not to be embraced, or even lightly kissed.  
She does, though, project a modest mien,  
rising only at morn, or descending at e’en,  
and never displaying her exquisite light  
at the top of the sky or all through the night.

She never complains, as far as I know,  
to those who shout at her, “Look, a UFO!”  
and she never disdains, I’m happy to say,  
to help dimmer stars make a stirring display.  
And she never quails from July through June  
to show up beside the much brighter Moon.

I’ve heard that volcanoes her clouds obscure;  
and basins where lakes could not endure.  
No fields of clover she hides from view,  
Despite her clouds of CO<sub>2</sub>  
For centuries now it’s been well known  
She doesn’t provide any light of her own.  
Not a single spark of self-made fire;  
For centuries now we’ve gazed up to admire.

Venus lines up to the left of the Gemini Twins on the 2nd. Then the cosmic quartet of the month will be performing the evenings of 19th-21st as Leo’s bright star Regulus, and the two brightest objects in the night sky (after the Moon) line up in a slanted angle with Regulus topside, Jupiter in the middle, and Venus below, while the Moon shines beside each in sequence, starting with Venus. The two planets stay within speaking distance thereafter.

Summer will be in time for the last performance, sneaking into the “auditorium” at 8a38 the morning of the 21st. In other activity, Saturn hangs low around Scorpio’s ruby Antares the 1st and 2nd, and with the Moon in the evening twilight the 28th-29th. Then at the month’s finale, Venus and Jupiter form a close duet on the 30th. Moon is full the 2nd at 11a19, new the 16th at 9a05.

## Bells, Yells, and Birdsong

### Dru Clarke



Sometimes, at six o'clock in the evening, we can hear the pealing bell of Saint Joseph's Church in Flush, six miles away, as the sound resonates through the hollow.

Our home is in a notch, subtended by a close, but buxom hill running east-west, it being perpendicular to a long, rolling ridge to the east, oriented north-south beyond a road, dense woods, a creek and a rising prairie slope. The church is northeast of these landforms on a low, unrelieved plane, so the sound of the bell moves unimpeded in that direction, but takes a more convoluted path to us.

In Jean-François Millet painting, "The Angelus," two peasants at the end of day, hearing the bell from a church on the horizon, bow their heads in prayer. At their feet is a basket of potatoes, not unlike the basket of eggs we collected today. As a child growing up, I knew this painting from a reproduction of it on an oval box we used for mail, and it conveyed a feeling of reverence and peace\*.

We'd like to think of the ringing as a signal to end our chores, check to make sure all gates are closed, water troughs full, cattle and horses fed, and eggs gathered. Now, the sound of the bell is our angelus\*\* : the day is done and all is well.

Bells have a long and rich history, probably originating with the Chinese more than 4000 years ago when metallurgy was first employed. Today they range in size from tiny jingle bells to giants of nearly 300 tons. First created as symbols of wealth and nobility, other uses evolved with their spread: Kublai Khan's runner-messengers wore bells on a belt to alert folks of their approach. Bells worldwide are used on livestock and companion animals to detect their whereabouts (our dogs wear bells on their collars). Schools, places of worship and meditation, and ships all use bells as signals. We have an old school bell mounted in front of our cottage that I ring to get my husband's attention: ideally, the hum note should be an octave below the strike note, but it doesn't "ring true," so it sounds disharmonious but loud enough to be heard at least as far as the barn and corrals.

Supposedly, in nature there are no animals that sound like bells. But, our blue jays make a bell-like sound, and there is a bellbird in Australia that sounds to me like ship's sonar, a tinkling, echoing ring. But much bird song, while not bell-like, is lovely enough to compare to other musical instruments – flutes come to mind – or simply to soar without metaphor. Who could forget the tumbling, liquid warble of a canyon wren (the Grand Canyon on our way to Phantom Ranch), the sweet notes of western

meadowlarks (a pasture in the Flint Hills), or the melody of a hermit thrush (the woods in the Highlands of New Jersey): each song transports me to that place where I first heard it:

no need of another vehicle. The perception of a sound endures in one's memory for 0.1 seconds, so if the sound travels more than 1100 feet or 343 meters, it can reflect once it hits a boundary and return as an echo. One canyon wren became many, falling down the steep escarpments: we were drowned in a sea of their sound.

"Hollering" is what rural Southern Appalachian folks, and some others, do when they don't have bells or other forms of communication. While hollering can be expressive, it is chiefly functional (e.g. to work in synchrony or to call in the chickens), and who hasn't hollered when in distress? My husband hollers to the cows to come in, "Hey bos, hey bos" ('bos' being the genus name of bovines; husband, unaware of that connection.) When I asked him where he had heard it before, he told me they used it on his friend's spread in western Kansas to get the cattle moving. The word "holler" dates from the 1690s, and it from the obsolete "hollo,, meaning "hail!" "stop!" "hello!" Hollers recorded by John and Ruby Lomax in the 1930s often employ melismas, the singing of a single syllable while moving between several different notes. Mariah Carey's "Vision of Love," according to the New Yorker, is the "Magna Carta of Melisma." The holler-song, a Southern black folk song, epitomized by Leadbelly and others, was the precursor of the blues.

Whether it is the sound of a bell, a bird song, or a voice hollering, we encounter a boundary in time and space that requires our attention. We would do well to be reverent, heed each signal or miss its intent.

*\* Salvador Dali was unsettled by Millet's painting "The Angelus" and insisted that it was not a ritual prayer but a couple mourning over the death of their infant. He insisted that the Louvre x-ray the painting, and, indeed, the painting showed a small coffin overpainted by the basket of potatoes.*

*\*\*The ringing signifies a call to prayer, the Angelus, which, in the Catholic faith, honors Mary as the mother of Jesus, the incarnation of God. The Angelus is supposed to be spoken three times a day but it is not widely practiced today, so the bell's tolling may be for the passing of this ritual prayer.*

© Dru Clarke Feb. 24-25, 2015

# RiverKeepers

For those interested in an adventure close to home consider a canoe/kayak trip on the Kaw.

This is a great way to see birds too!

Check out this website:

<http://kansasriver.org/>

## Kansas River Currents

Check out our latest [newsletter](#) for a review of FOK's activities and accomplishments in 2014!

### The Kansas River



The Kansas River (known locally as the Kaw) begins at the confluence of the Republican and Smoky Hill Rivers near Junction City. It flows 173 miles to Kansas City where it joins the Missouri River. The Kaw watershed drains almost the entire northern half of Kansas and part of Nebraska and Colorado (53,000 square miles). It is the world's largest prairie based river system.



LEARN FLOAT AND FISH PROTECT STORMWATER WHAT'S NEW

### We have a lot going on this summer...come join us on a cleanup float or call today to schedule your group float!



We have several cleanup floats scheduled this summer! See our most current schedule below...

When you join our cleanup float, you will help us pick up trash in the Kansas River and on sandbars...we will set you up with a canoe or kayak, life jacket, paddle and a full crew of experience paddlers and guides to help you learn as you go! We will also stop on a sandbar and enjoy a hotdog and marshmallow roast!

So take a look at your calendar...and email Dawn Buehler, the Kansas Riverkeeper at [riverkeeper@kansasriver.org](mailto:riverkeeper@kansasriver.org) to sign up! We have a limit for each float, so hurry and RSVP!

### FOK Float Schedule:

Friends of the Kaw has lots of opportunities to get on the river this spring and summer. Many of the floats are paid for by grants so boat rental is free on a first come, first serve basis - participants must RSVP. For educational floats scheduled by specific groups, any boats not used are available for the public to rent. RSVPs can be made two weeks before the float date. Folks with their own boats are welcome to join any float but should RSVP to [Dawn](#) (our new Kansas Riverkeeper) in case there are last minute changes.



Saturday, May 30 - Konza Rotary Float in the Manhattan area from 10am to 4pm. We will make the decision to float either Ogden to Manhattan, Manhattan to St. George or St. George to Wamego two days before the float depending on the predicted wind conditions. Contact [Dawn](#) to inquire about available boats for this float after May 16 or for more information.

Sunday, May 31 - Eudora Community Float! Float begins at 1:00pm. This float is in partnership with Eudora Parks and Recreation!

Saturday, June 6 - Cleanup Float from Cedar Creek to Edwardsville from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm  
We will provide 5 canoes and 5 double kayaks at no cost on a first come, first serve basis but participants MUST RSVP with [Dawn](#) or at 785 312 7200. This is an activity of our Johnson County Stormwater Grant.

Sunday, June 7 - Shawnee Mission Unitarian Fellowship float from DeSoto to Cedar Creek from 1 to 5pm. Contact [Dawn](#) to inquire about available boat rentals for this float after May 24 or for more information.

Saturday, June 20 (Rescheduled) - Cleanup Float from Lawrence to Eudora from 10:00 am to 4:00pm. Meet at the [8th Street Access Ramp](#). We will provide 5 canoes and 5 double kayaks at no cost on a first come, first serve basis but participants MUST RSVP with [Dawn](#) or at 785 312 7200. We will provide transportation to take participants back to Lawrence after the float. This is an activity of our Douglas County Natural and Cultural Heritage Grant.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### 2015 Float Trips

We already have a full float schedule for this spring but we have lots of available dates for summer and fall. Contact us for available dates! [Click here](#) for more information on our 2015 trips.

#### Join Us!

Stay informed about the latest news related to the Kansas River and support Friends of the Kaw in protecting this valuable resource by becoming a member today. [Click here](#) to learn more.

### REPORT POLLUTION



Help us to fight pollution on the Kaw. Report events or activities on or near the river that could negatively impact water quality.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### 1 January, 1970

Konza Rotary Float - All Day  
Topeka Gives - All Day  
Jo Co Cleanup Float - All Day  
SM Unitarian Float - All Day  
Boulevardia - All Day

### NEWSLETTER



# Migratory Bird Count “Global Day”



As of Monday morning, May 11, Global Big Day included participation from more than **11,000 individuals** from 119 countries, tallying more than **5,600 species** on more than 36,000 checklists.

## A few highlights:

The very first bird reported for Global Big Day was a **Bush Thick-knee from Queensland, Australia.**

Every country in Central America participated, along with 16 countries in the Caribbean.

In **Panama**, Sociedad Audubon de Panamá mobilized teams nationwide, with 84 birders posting over 650 checklists and 620 species, almost two-thirds of the country's species! Prominent and luxurious birder destinations including the Canopy Family (Canopy Tower, Canopy Lodge, Canopy Camp, and Canopy B&B), Los Quetzales Ecolodge and Spa, and Tranquilo Bay Eco Lodge also mobilized teams to participate in Global Big Day, hosted Cornell Lab staff in the lead up to the Big Day, and provided amazing logistical support. Every one of them provides a great birding destination for visitors to Panama and is highly recommended.

South America had stellar participation; birders mobilized by SAVE Brasil and Butantan Bird Observatory reported more than **1,060 species in Brazil**

In **Peru**, the organization CORBIDI motivated birders across the country with more than 940 species

**More than 28,500 checklists were submitted from all 50 U.S. states and every Canadian province and territory.**

30 countries in **Europe** joined the effort; kudos to Lithuania, where the organization ORNI prompted participation and resulted in 22 checklists.

**India** is one of the most active eBird countries year-round and turned in a most impressive 548 checklists during Global Big Day.

**Taiwan** contributed an exceptional number of sightings, reporting more than 200 species

In Malaysia, thanks to the Sandakan Borneo Bird Club in the Sabah portion of Borneo, participants submitted 53 checklists with a whopping 333 species.

BirdLife **Zimbabwe** did a great job with the event and birders there have contributed 232 species, one of the highest totals from a country in Africa so far.

**Australia** is in the top 5 participating countries and closing in on an astonishing 500 species.



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Also available on-line at [www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html](http://www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html)

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, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership renewals are also handled by the National Audubon Society. 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, 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](mailto:list_serve@ksu.edu)> and join in the discussions.

#### NFHAS Board

President: Patricia Yeager - [pyky@flinthills.com](mailto:pyky@flinthills.com) 776-9593  
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Treasurer: Carla Bishop - [cbishop@k-state.edu](mailto:cbishop@k-state.edu)

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Programs: Kevin Fay

Conservation:

Butterfly Garden:

Education:

Land Preservation:

Bird Seed Sales: Board members

Newsletter: Cindy Jeffrey [cinraney@ksu.edu](mailto:cinraney@ksu.edu) 532-3157

Fieldtrips: Patricia Yeager, Kevin Fay 776-9593

At-large: Tom Morgan

Audubon of Kansas Trustee: Michael Donnelly

Contacts for Your Elected Representatives (anytime) Write, call or email:

Governor Sam Brownback, 2nd Floor, State Capital Bldg, Topeka, KS 66612.

KS Senator or Representative: State Capital Bldg, Topeka, KS 66612. Ph# (during session only) Senate - 785-296-7300. House - 785-296-7500. U.S. Senator Roberts <[Roberts@senate.gov](mailto:Roberts@senate.gov)> U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510.