

*This issue is dedicated to the
memory of Jan Garton,
a long-time NEHAS member,
board member, and friend.*



NORTHERN Flint Hills Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 1932, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1932



PRAIRIE FALCON

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 38, No. 4 ~ DECEMBER 2009

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Upcoming Events:

DEC. 5 - BIRD SEED SALE PICKUP
UFM 9-12N

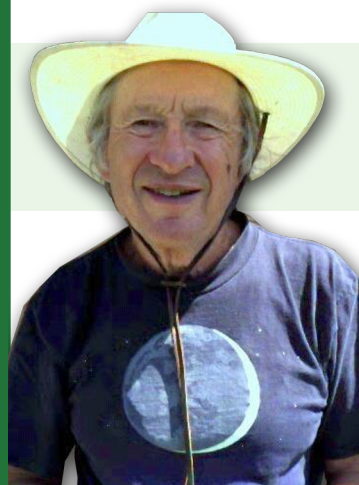
*DEC.7 - BOARD MEETING 6:00 p.m.
(TOM & MJ MORGAN HOME)

DEC. 19 - MANHATTAN CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

JAN. 2 - EAGLE DAYS, TUTTLE CREEK LAKE

JAN. 4 - BOARD MEETING 6:00 p.m.
(TOM & MJ MORGAN HOME)

* NOTE CHANGE - BOARD MEETINGS NOW ON
Mondays AT 6:00



SKYLIGHT PLUS

PETE COHEN

It caught my eye
– a news story of an
exhibition (in Florence,
Italy, till January
24th) of art known as
“trompe l’oeil” – the

French phrase having achieved primacy in describing deliberate illusions. The notice featured an 1874 painting by Pere Borrell del Caso (1835-1910), titled “*escapanda de la critica*” (Escaping Criticism) in which the supposed frame is part of the painting and a wild-eyed boy seems to be climbing out from the frame, parts of his head, a hand, and a foot appear in front of the “frame.” It called to my mind the works of M.C. Escher – for example his staircase that goes ever upward in a roundabout to its point of beginning without ever seeming to descend. Yet, to me, Escher’s works bedazzle the eye without fooling it. The clever manipulations of form are recognized for what they are. And with the art of people like Max Malini (1873-1942), who would have a person cover a coin with a hat, then after struggling to move the hat, would suddenly lift it to reveal a block of ice, the eyes were distracted into seeing clearly certain real movements but not others.

So I got to contemplating how many real deceptions our eyes have to deal with without going to a gallery or a magic show or looking in a book. From early on we encounter perspective and learn not to be surprised that the far tree that seems no taller than a thumb is actually much taller, and that the railroad tracks receding into the distance do not really come together. And that the photos in advertisements do not necessarily accurately represent what ‘tis said they do.

But hikes can still be enlivened by stumps or shadows that successfully mimic bears, and because light alters course when moving from a medium of one density to another, the jagged limb below the surface of a stream is not where the approaching canoeist’s eyes say it waits.

A person wearing dark clothes seems thinner than when wearing white, and the image of the “fat” moon or sun rising or setting is really the same size as the “shrunk” image high aloft. Differing proximities and backgrounds make things in the foreground look paler or darker, closer or farther, larger or smaller. And while most of these effects are no more than casual, there can be times when they become immediately significant, so it’s well to have the printed reminder in our side-view mirrors that “the objects you see are closer than they seem.”

With no chicanery, Jupiter waves goodbye in the west early these coming evenings as Mars rises in the east, gradually doubling in brightness during the month without overdoing it, but keeping up with Regulus that will be nearby at the bottom of Leo’s sickle.

For brightness, look northeast where Capella will be gleaming in the upper trailing corner of Auriga’s pentagon and at the edge of the Milky Way. A little further northward in the Milky Way will be the notable brightnesses of Perseus and beyond those, Cassiopeia will be displaying herself as an “M.”

Meanwhile passing across center stage to the south will be Orion pushing Taurus the Bull backward and westward while the Big Dog jumps up behind and the Gemini twins go sailing along recumbently just a little higher and behind with the bright stars, Castor and Pollux at the trailing end. The Gemini meteor shower peaks on the 13th without moonlight competition, and the winter solstice occurs at 11a47 CST the 21st. The Moon is full twice: on the 2nd at 1a30 and then comes the 31st when Sirius, the Big Dog’s sparkling eye, the brightest star of all, usually signals the midnight hour from due south on its own. But this year the Moon will be up there, too, full to bursting, though having been officially full at 1p13. It will be new on the 16th at 6a02. And, for fans of coincidence, Borrell del Caso’s dates coincide with those of Mark Twain and with consecutive appearance of Halley’s Comet.

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SQUIRRELS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

DRU CLARKE

When my son Dan was in the third grade, he won first place for an art poster promoting reading: his creation was of a gray squirrel running along a branch with a book in one front paw. It was pretty cute. Peter Parnall, a famous wildlife artist who often draws the commonplace, was the judge, so his affirmation was especially welcome. This was in New Jersey where the gray squirrel is the predominant species, while here in the plains, the fox squirrel dominates. Dan chose a squirrel not because it was particularly remarkable but because it was familiar and commonplace to him.

We overlook this most common of native wild animals until they do something outrageously funny or something very, very bad (as in, destructive to something we prize). The latter causes us to curse their omnipresence and devise evil plans to rid ourselves of them. They are so despised in the South that they refer to them with scorn, calling them “tree rats.” Well, they are rodents, of the *Sciurus* clan (28 sp. found on most continents except Antarctica), and they are arboreal in habit, unless, of course, they’ve descended to the ground to bury a nut or scurry around tree trunks, chasing one another. A lapse in memory of where those nuts are buried helps replenish dwindling forests, so we can at least thank them for that.

People who feed birds have had to outwit squirrels who have enormous appetites for the same goodies for which we shell out big bucks. At home, we’ve solved that problem by stringing baling twine between sturdy limbs of big trees and hanging our feeders from the twine, high and taut enough so that cats can’t reach them either. We refill the feeders by extending a hook attached to a long pole to retrieve them from the twine, so far, so good. And, we provide some cob corn for the squirrels, to assuage their frustration. This year, too, has been an exceptionally good one for nuts: acorns and hickory nuts are abundant, so the squirrels have been actively stashing them away, so much for patting ourselves on the back for inventiveness.

Squirrels can be destructive of our possessions. I remember when I was a kid, one got into our summer house and chewed up all the mullions in the windows in an attempt to escape. It finally must have figured a way out (up the fireplace chimney, we suppose) as we never found a dead one. Others have a taste for cables and wires. At our first attempt at renovating an old house, after spending two years cleaning out raccoon scat and trying to remove milk paint from the woodwork before we moved in, a neighbor called one windy evening and said it looked as if the house was on fire. We arrived just in time to see the north wall fall in to a flaming

pile. In scouting around the next day, in the front yard, I found a squirrel, frozen in escape posture, with a startled look on its frizzled face. We think it must have gnawed through an old electrical wire that sparked and caused the dry wooden frame to ignite.

But they can be comical as well. I stood like a fool on a campus sidewalk looking at a fox squirrel with a double pecan jutting from either side of its clamped jaws. It looked even more foolish than I. It, too, sat and looked at me, as if I could help it decide just what to do with this bonanza. It then went around one side of the pecan tree, then came back and sat some more, still exhorting me silently to offer advice, then hopped around to the other side of the tree. I’m not sure what it finally did with the pecan.

A few years ago there was a spectacular, car-stopping piebald squirrel that had its territory straddling Lover’s Lane, around the KSU president’s house. When this mocha and white animal was encountered, folks would stop, look, and be very quiet before moving on. I even had a spontaneous conversation with a stranger about it one day after it disappeared into the trees. (At KU’s Museum of Natural History there is a crow with this color pattern and they refer to it as “schizochroic,” so I suppose that is the correct terminology for a similarly colored squirrel as well.)

Squirrels evoke strong positive as well as negative emotions. I have a good friend who raises “orphaned” squirrels (she has legal permission to do so). Young ones would cuddle like kittens in her lap. She becomes very attached to them and they live long lives under her watchful eye - much longer than they would in the wild. I would not want to do that as I would feel an abject failure if one died during my watch. An Armenian friend and I were working on translating a Russian story about a squirrel and she could not pronounce it in English, saying “quirrel” instead. Every time we referred to the “quirrel” we would break into gales of uncontrollable laughter. I think of her and smile every time I see a “quirrel” looking quizzically in my direction.

In winter, if you look up into the boughs of big trees, you will see the nests of our neighboring squirrels. They are shaggy constructions of considerable heft, built to last stormy weather and strong winds. Considering the ubiquitous nature of the squirrel clan that we take for granted, I’d say they are here to stay, whether we like them or not. © Nov.11,2009 DClarke

Note: If you have a good squirrel story and would like to share it, contact Dru at drucl@wamego.net

REMEMBERING JAN

The Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society was started in 1975. We aren't sure exactly when Jan joined. But in 1983, the chapter was at a low ebb for activity. Only 3 people ran for office. Sil Pembleton was elected President; Monty Hinton, VP; and Di Ann Roberts, Treasurer. (Monty & Di Ann were both KSU students). Jan volunteered to be the Conservation Committee Chair and also assumed the role of Secretary.

They began to beat the bushes for other good volunteers (like Dave Rintoul) to help with programs, fieldtrips, newsletter, etc. Jan and Sil decided the chapter needed an issue to rally around. Jan selected Cheyenne Bottoms, which had pretty much been written off by the Kansas Fish & Game. Also in '83, she wrote several articles in the *Prairie Falcon*, about the proposed changes to the Alaska Lands Act, and the necessity of protecting the National Park System as well as re-authorization of the Clean Air Act. In another early issue she tackled the Kansas State Water Plan.

In 1984, Jan became the chapter vice-president as well as conservation chair. The campaign to "Save Cheyenne Bottoms" was well underway by then. In 1985, Jan became president of the Kansas Audubon Council and by the end of 1985 the Kansas Legislature approved a funding measure for a major study of Cheyenne Bottoms, looking at the geology, biology, ecology and hydrology of the area and making recommendations on the best way to restore the area.

In 1986 Jan testified before the Special Committee on Energy and Natural Resources regarding the Kansas State Water Plan. In 1987 she was active in the efforts to protect Eureka Lake, the last natural ox-bow lake existing in Kansas.

Jan continued to champion Cheyenne Bottoms for at least the next 10 years. In 1999, Jan donated 1.5 cubic feet of conservation documents related to the Bottoms campaign to the State Historical Society in Topeka.

Provided by Sil Pembleton

Ron Klataske wrote:

Jan in partnership with Sil Pembleton and others including Joyce Wolf, led a statewide campaign to restore priority water rights for Cheyenne Bottoms. Jan devoted at least a decade, working as a volunteer advocate day and night, to Cheyenne Bottoms. Success was achieved in the Kansas Legislature, with a succession of governors and in the critical legal battles that equally involved the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

In a multi-faceted campaign, one of the most novel ideas that Jan advanced was the development of "Save Our Bottoms" seat pads presented to all members of the state legislature. They were attractively designed to serve as a constant reminder of Cheyenne Bottoms. Bumper stickers with the similar message have only recently vanished as the many vehicles that displayed them have been retired.

In 1990 Jan Garton was honored with the prestigious Chevron Conservation Award, the third Kansan to be recognized with a Chevron Conservation Award, the country's oldest private conservation award program judged by a panel of independent conservationists. The award was originally created by the late, outdoor writer Ed Zern in 1954.

One of the things usually missing from official display is the vital role of public citizen conservation advocates in pushing governmental agencies and lobbying other institutions to do the right thing to protect our natural heritage of wetlands, wildlife, prairies, rivers and more. As a leader for the Kansas Audubon Council and the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, Jan provided the passion and intellect that was the catalyst for turning the fate of Cheyenne Bottoms from one of dryland fields to a wonderfully managed wetland complex.

If Kansas, like Missouri, ever develops a conservation hall of fame, I trust that Jan will be honored with a plaque—and an accompanying "Save the Bottoms" seat cushion in a case nearby.

Ron Klataske (Audubon of Kansas)

I met Jan only once, but it is a very sharp memory! In my first year in Manhattan (2004), Tom and I showed up at the Michel-Ross Nature Preserve one early Saturday to do trash pickup. As we walked up the hill, we saw a lone, vigorous woman in a bright red quilted vest, dragging a large, filled, trash sack behind her. She was working her way towards us, wearing heavy work gloves and picking up bottles and broken glass. I saw her silhouetted in that early light -- high energy, resolute, purposeful. "That's Jan Garton," Tom said. It was just the three of us that early fall day. Her handshake was firm. Sometimes these chance meetings give us images we will carry all our lives - because they bespeak the soul.

MJ Morgan, NFHAS Vice Pres.

Jan held a position on the NFHAS board almost every year, sometimes two; president, VP, secretary, treasurer, conservation chair, program chair and birdseed sales. She held the position of treasurer until 2006. Her contribution was much more than being a member of the board. She pulled weeds, honeysuckle, picked up trash, helped build birding trails – and even a bridge.

The world needs political people who will fight "City Hall" over environmental issues. The world also needs people who commune with nature by watching birds and hiking in the woods. Jan Garton was both types of people. NFHAS is a better organization for having known Jan Garton.

Jan's contributions to the Prairie Falcon since 1998 can be found On-line:

<http://www.k-state.edu/audubon/download.html>

- Mar. 1998 – "Recycling Pays Dividends"
- May 1999 – Conservation Easement Program
- Sept. 1999 – NFHAS underwrites "The Lives of Birds with David Attenborough" on KTWU
- Dec. 1999 – "Concerted Effort Results in Preserve Cleanup" Michel-Ross Audubon Preserve
- Feb. 2000 – "Sustainable Manhattan Roundtable"
- Nov. 2000 – Conservation Concert – fundraising event for Cecil Best Birding Trail
- Feb. 2001 – Cecil Best Birding Trail
- Apr. 2001 – Thank you – Michel-Ross Preserve
- Oct. 2001 – Zimmerman Concert – Huge Success (for Michel-Ross Preserve)
- Nov. 2001 – "Bird runner Wildlife" Margy Stewart
- Dec. 2001 – Peony Sale – Paul Weidhaas thanks all who helped
- Jun. 2002 – Memorial to Gene Donovan
- Jan. 2003 – "Looking Ahead to the 108th Congress"
- Jan. 2004 – "Sustainable Forestry Initiative"
- Nov. 2004 – "Conserve Energy"

Thanks to Sil Pembleton, Ron Klataske, Carla Bishop, and MJ Morgan for sharing their memories with us.

REMEMBERING JAN



Cecil Best Birding Trail
Dedication

What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset. ~*Crowfoot, 1890, as quoted in Catch the Whisper of the Wind compiled by Cheewa James*

The deep pain that is felt at the death of every friendly soul arises from the feeling that there is in every individual something which is inexpressible, peculiar to him alone, and is, therefore, absolutely and irretrievably lost. ~*Arthur Schopenhauer*



Quivera - Jan is not in this photo - but it reminds us of Cheyenne Bottoms, and Jan's efforts to save the wetlands.

Building the bridge on the
Cecil Best Birding Trail



I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in. ~John Muir, 1913, in L.M. Wolfe, ed., *John Muir, John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*, 1938

Life is a mixed blessing, which we vainly try to unmix.
~Mignon McLaughlin, *The Second Neurotic's Notebook*,
1966



AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS:

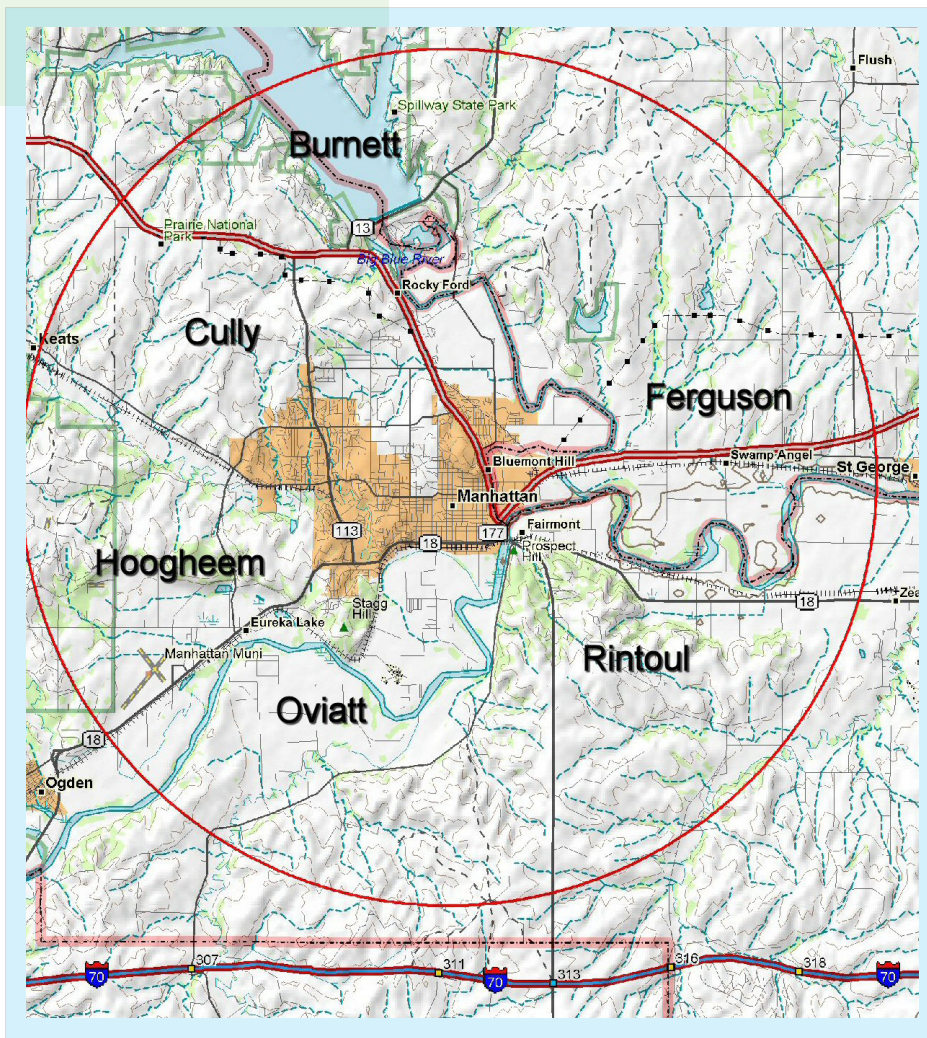
**DEC. 19, 2009
MANHATTAN CBC
DAVE RINTOUL,
785-532-6615**

Manhattan CBC Compilation Dinner/Chili Supper

Join the NFHAS and fellow birders for a potluck supper at 6 p.m., Dec. 19, at the Seniors Service Center, 412 Leavenworth, Manhattan.

Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share. Also, this year we request that everyone bring their own table settings to help control the amount of trash generated after the meal. Disposable plates, cups and napkins will be available, if needed.

Enjoy good food, good companionship, and find out how this year's count compares to previous years. If you have any questions on what to bring for the supper or want to help setup, please call Carla Bishop, 539-5129 or 532-1858 or email: cbishop@ksu.edu



OTHER AREA CBC - NEED BIRDERS TOO

DEC. 20, 2009 WAKEFIELD CBC

CHUCK OTTE, 785-238-8800, OTTE2@COX.NET

DEC. 21, 2009 OLSBURG CBC

GARY JEFFREY, 785-468-3587, GJEFFREY@TWINVALLEY.NET

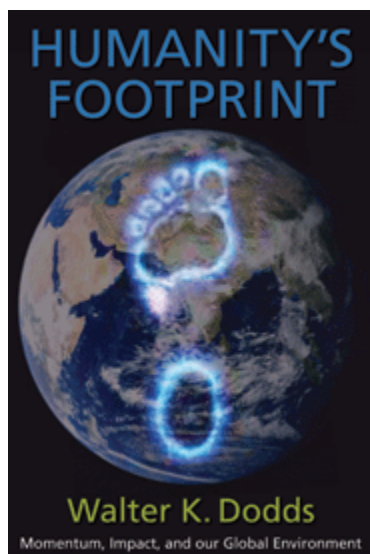
DEC. 27, 2009 JUNCTION CITY CBC

CHUCK OTTE, 785-238-8800 OTTE2@COX.NET

JAN. 2, 2010 BLUE RAPIDS CBC

TOM PARKER, 785-363-7228 TLPARKER1@SBCGLOBAL.NET

HUMANITY'S FOOTPRINT: MOMENTUM, IMPACT, AND OUR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT WALTER K. DODDS



For the first time in history, humans have exceeded the sustaining capacity of Earth's global ecosystems. Our expanding footprint has tremendous momentum, and the insidious explosion of human impact creates a shockwave that threatens ecosystems worldwide for decades-possibly centuries.

Walter K. Dodds depicts in clear, nontechnical terms the root causes and global environmental effects of human behavior. He describes trends in population growth, resource use, and global environmental impacts of the past two centuries, such as greenhouse effects, ozone depletion, water pollution, and species extinctions and introductions. Dodds also addresses less familiar developments, such as the spread of antibiotic resistant genes in bacteria and the concentration of pesticides in the Arctic and other remote ecosystems. He identifies fundamental human activities that have irreversible effects on the environment and draws on recent social science and game theory results to explain why people use more than their share. Past behavior indicates that as resources grow scarce, humans will escalate their use of what remains instead of managing their consumption. *Humanity's Footprint* paints a lively but ultimately sobering picture of our environmental predicament. Dodds calls for a consilient approach to socioenvironmental restoration that draws on new thinking from across disciplines to develop sustainable solutions to global environmental problems.

Walter K. Dodds is a professor of biology at Kansas State University and the author of *Freshwater Ecology: Concepts and Environmental Applications*. He researches water quality and aquatic biodiversity, is an investigator at the Konza Prairie Biological Station and leads the Kansas Ecological Forecasting Initiative.

**DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS
- DEC. 31, 2009**

ALL NFHAS MEMBERS: LAST CALL FOR PROPOSALS!

NFHAS Board members have targeted this year to fund a reader-initiated project. We are now soliciting ideas from our membership and will be posting the application guidelines in the next few months. So be thinking! What would you like to see your Audubon chapter underwrite? Habitat conservation, biology field work scholarships, support for an endangered bird species, research funds, a collaborative preservation project with another agency or group? We welcome creative, innovative and unusual approaches to wise spending of monies. We will ask that the project selected have a responsible party who will agree to write brief updates for the Prairie Falcon, perhaps twice a year, on the project as it unfolds. This person may also be asked to attend NFHAS board meetings from time to time. This would be the extent of any administrative duties.

If you are wondering about the feasibility of an idea, please email Patricia Yeager, NFHAS President, at pyky@flinthills.com, just with ideas/inquiries. The more formal proposal will come later. We would love to fund a project unique to our area and arising from the passionate commitment of our membership.

TAKE NOTE



E-NEWSLETTER: If you wish to opt out of the "paper" Prairie Falcon newsletter and get it on-line as a pdf - send your name and email address to Jacque Staats - staats@wildblue.net



NORTHERN FLINT HILLS
Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1932
MANHATTAN, KS
66505-1932

PRINTED ON 100% POST-CONSUMER
RECYCLED PAPER

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 662
MANHATTAN, KS 66502

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Published monthly (except August) by the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.
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Also available on-line at www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html

Subscription Information: Introductory memberships - \$20/yr., then basic membership is \$35/yr. 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 newsletter. New membership applications may be sent to Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS 66505-1932. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership renewals are handled by the National Audubon Society and should not be sent to the NFHAS. Questions about membership? Call 1-800-274-4201 or email the National Audubon Society join@audubon.org.

If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in our 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> and join in the discussions.

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Land Preservation:		
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Fieldtrips:	Patricia Yeager, Kevin Fay	776-9593
At-large:	Tom Morgan	
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Governor Mark Parkinson: 2nd Floor, State Capital Bldg, Topeka, KS 66612.

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