

The Flint Hills Audubon Society and the Flint Hills Discovery Center present:

## Wildlife Photography with Mike Blair



**Saturday, February 10**

**2:00pm – 3:00pm**

**Flint Hills Discovery Center**

**FREE and open to the public**

Join us for a special presentation from award-winning wildlife photographer and author Mike Blair. He will premiere his new short film “North Meets South: Nighthawks and Snow Geese” showcasing these two amazing migratory species. Mike will then present a mini-seminar on wildlife photography including camera equipment, calling animals, and the importance of animal behavior. Don’t miss this rare opportunity to learn from an expert in the field!

Mike worked for Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks as a photographer and associate magazine editor. In 2012, when funding issues were going to force him to “come in from the field and write copy,” he elected to retire. Since then he has written for nearly 100 magazine titles on a freelance basis. Along the way, he switched from still photos and print publications to video, which conveys the emotion, sight, sound and motion of wildlife. He currently has an outdoor TV series entitled “Wild Edge” running on all PBS stations in Kansas.

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



## prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 46, No. 6 ~ February 2018

### Inside

pg. 2- Skylight- Pete Cohen

pg. 3 - HEAT- Dru Clarke

pg. 4- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

pg. 5- 2017 CBC summary- Mark Mayfield

### Upcoming Events

Feb. 5 - Board Meeting- 6:00 pm  
Tom & MJ Morgan home

Feb. 10 - Saturday Morning Birding 8 am-11 am  
Departing from Sojourner Truth Park

Feb. 10 - MIKE BLAIR- at the Discovery Center  
2-3 pm



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

One of the things going on about us steadily, attended to by a certain minority of people, while beyond the thoughts of most everyone else, is the different reactions being given to our streams.

An article in the Manhattan Mercury last December 18th reported on studies being done in Kansas on the effect of low water dams on fish populations. The article said these studies, aimed at taking a more holistic view of the effects than was done in the past, have noted that not only was aquatic diversity more alive and well below dams than above, as was known, but that the diversity could be found immediately below dams and not necessarily at some recovery distance in the free-flowing areas downstream, a distinction important in making future decisions.

The article was generally stated. Meanwhile I received an undated excerpt from the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer publication of the state's Dept. of Natural Resources that includes some specifics. For example, a 16-foot milldam built in 1872 was removed from the Pomme de Terre river in 1997. A meandering channel was dug in the 15 feet of accumulated sediment, and stabilized with rock and plantings. Of the 17 native species that returned upstream (along with canoeists and kayakers) nine were important hosts for water-cleansing mussels.

In another instance of dam removal, the sediment involved was contaminated with a natural source of arsenic. To avoid digging a channel and setting loose some of that arsenic, a rapids was established atop the sediment.

I have not been able to find any reportage on any corollary effects the removal of long-in-place dams has had on other aspects of water courses involved. I wonder because flowing water carves and meanders. One informed approximation I've read suggested a stream left alone will add a third of the distance between two points far enough distant. This meandering, being slower than direct flow, moderates carving giving bankside environments more time to develop and exist, while recharging the water table over a wider distance.

Thus, a meander is a kind of dam. When one such curve downstream on the creek that crosses our place was cut across to the width of a bulldozer blade, the increased speed (i.e.: force) of the arrow-straight flow soon eliminated the curve above, producing more speed and the elimination of the bend next above. The result being that the sedimentary pools that supported bluegills, pollywogs, natrixes, crawdads, etc. were washed out, leaving behind a gravel ditch where only small schools of chubs could survive. The dozer-wide original cut was soon torn wide enough to contain a two-lane highway.

That first happened thirty years ago. About ten years ago the creek began starting to carve noticeable meanders again, with the trees it took down from its banks providing impediments that encouraged the re-forming of sedimentary pools. But a flood control dam installed upstream has slowed the process, and while there is some renewed crawdad activity, the gravel and stony riffles continue to predominate. I hope the Kansas studies result in some very careful holistic decisions.

In the near term, the celestial impresarios are again planning to put their planet "stars" in view during February for the after-midnight and early rising audience, with an exception of Venus giving brief performances in the evening twilights. Next bright Jupiter will be rising in the wee hours and will be to the lower left of the Moon the 7th. Saturn, though rising a little later will be close below to the right of the Moon in the early light of the 11th.

Mars, in Scorpius, will be above and left of the similarly red real star, Antares, in the dawn lights, with the Moon to its left on the 9th. At the other times, the Moon will start off to the right of Leo's Regulus on the 1st, and be above Virgo's Spica early on the 5th, then take time to bow to the evening crowd from next to Taurus' Aldebaran in the evening twilight of the 23rd, before returning to another morning gig with Regulus the 28th. It will be new the 15th at 3po5, so may show a thin crescent of itself above Saturn on the 16th. It will have no opportunity to display fully in this month of February.

© 2018 Peter Zachary Cohen

## HEAT

Dru Clarke

Coming in from the cold how I appreciate the warm water I use to wash my hands of the lingering, pungent scent and, sometimes, residue left from milking our Jersey and brushing Harry, the fluffy white calf who seems to need tender hugs each morning. Welcome, too, the heat from the stove where we dry our gloves, face scarves, jackets, and washed cheese cloth used to strain Iris' milk, and our numb fingers and toes. Heat, today, is good.

Winter is supposed to be cold. The degree to which it chills us to the bone is just that: a matter of degree. These cold temperatures seem to give credence to and reinforce the belief some folks have that warming of Earth is a hoax or, at least, exaggerated. I'm not sure they understand the dynamics of the troposphere, the layer of the atmosphere where weather is generated, and the very significant rise in the world's ocean temperature.

Even a slight increase, say 1 degree F, in ocean water leads to a greater increase in evaporation, that is, liquid water becoming a gas- a component of air – where it can move in winds from its place of origin through latitudes and longitudes many leagues distant. I have read that water holds 24 times as much heat as the same volume of air, so when it vaporizes, it takes heat with it and releases it when it condenses again, as rain or snow, ice, fog or mist. This is called latent heat. Tropical oceans between 30 degrees N and 30 degrees S, embracing the equator, supply more than half of this heat, and they are getting warmer. \* It's a given that the greater the gift from them as water vapor, the more precipitation in its myriad forms will occur. More heat being transferred and released in polar regions destabilizes the polar vortex which usually keeps frigid air over the Arctic, and it spills out and southward, like a pot boiling over its rim. The jet stream, too, undulates wildly, creating meanders with cold air on one bank and warm on the other. Depending on which side you are on distinctly affects your comfort and your attitude.

Polar and sea ice contribute their share of disruption. When reflective sea ice melts, the increasing area of dark ocean absorbs more heat. When sea ice reforms in the fall, it releases heat back into the atmosphere. A double whammy of heat transfer. Recently an increase in snow cover in Siberia created a white reflective surface that sends heat back into the troposphere to the stratosphere where, some climate scientists think, 'perturbations' could collapse the 'pen' of Arctic air, allowing its beastly escape to lower latitudes. That's where most of us live.\*\*

When I was a kid (in New Jersey), my best friend lived in a house catty corner from mine: I was on New York Avenue and she, on the corner of New York Avenue and Broad Street. One winter (late '40's) we dug tunnels through the drifts of snow to get to each other's house. We made snow caves and sledded down steep Maple Avenue past Sturges' house, shrieking all the way. The snow in its lovely crystalline state lasted more than a month, the ice on a neighbor's pond where we ice skated lasted even longer. Our cheeks were like pink rose buds the whole time, and we hated to come indoors.

With this cold snap, folks have been able to ice fish on Willow Pond, a cove below Tuttle Creek reservoir near Manhattan, Kansas. I wonder if the fishers realize how this came to be, and how remote and complicated the genesis of this welcome event is. Maybe it's an anomaly, or maybe it's a portent of patterns to come. Counterintuitive as it may seem, heat is to praise or blame.

\* Trewartha, Glenn T. "An Introduction to Climate" fourth edition (1968).

\*\* NOAA Information

© Jan 2018 Dru Clarke,

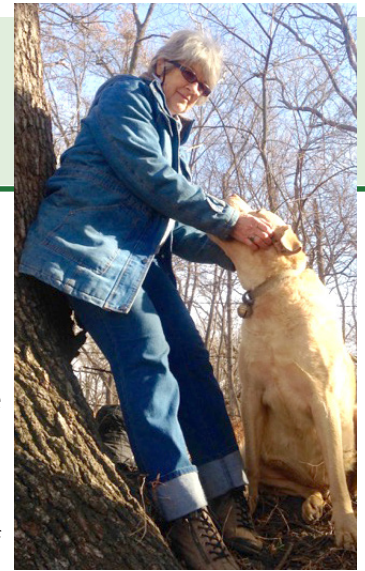


Photo by Dave Rintoul



# Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

## COOL FACTS

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker makes two kinds of holes in trees to harvest sap. Round holes extend deep in the tree and are not enlarged. The sapsucker inserts its bill into the hole to probe for sap. Rectangular holes are shallower, and must be maintained continually for the sap to flow. The sapsucker licks the sap from these holes, and eats the cambium of the tree too. New holes usually are made in a line with old holes, or in a new line above the old.

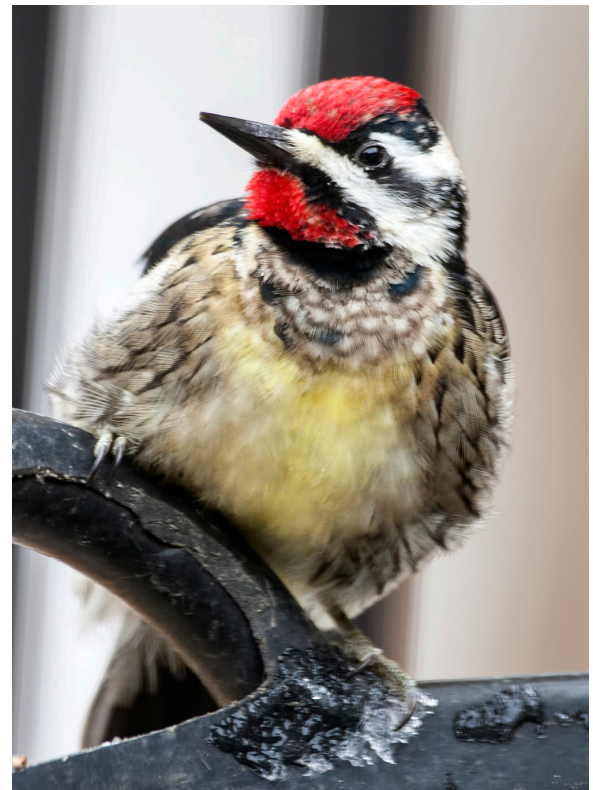
The sapwells made by Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers attract hummingbirds, which also feed off the sap flowing from the tree. In some parts of Canada, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds rely so much on sapwells that they time their spring migration with the arrival of sapsuckers. Other birds as well as bats and porcupines also visit sapsucker sapwells.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have been found drilling sapwells in more than 1,000 species of trees and woody plants, though they have a strong preference for birches and maples.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker frequently uses human-produced materials to help in its territorial drumming. Street signs and metal chimney flashing amplify the irregular tapping of a territorial sapsucker. The sapsucker seems to suffer no ill effects of whacking its bill on metal, and a bird will return to a favorite sign day after day to pound out its Morse code-like message.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is the only woodpecker in eastern North America that is completely migratory. Although a few individuals remain throughout much of the winter in the southern part of the breeding range, most head farther south, going as far south as Panama. Females tend to migrate farther south than do males.

The oldest known Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was a male, and at least 7 years, 9 months old. It was banded in New Jersey and found 6 years later in South Carolina.



*Photo by Dave Rintoul*

[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Yellow-bellied\\_Sapsucker/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Yellow-bellied_Sapsucker/lifehistory)



## US Army Corps of Engineers

I want to thank the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society for supporting the Tuttle Creek Corps of Engineers Eagle Day event again this year. Participants had the opportunity to hear from US Fish and Wildlife Services as well as Milford Nature Center. The highlight of the day was the bus tour to Tuttle Creek Lake for a little eagle spotting. The eagles cooperated and we observed both an adult and a juvenile birds.

A special thanks goes out to your members Patricia Yeager and Kevin Fay for assisting the day of the event. Having spotters out in the morning is a large part of making this event a success.

The financial contribution from your organization will be used directly to support the bus transportation we utilized for the event. The check can be made payable to USD 383 Transportation and can be sent to the address below.

Thank you again for your support of this event.

Angelia Lentz, Natural Resource Spc, Army Corps of Engineers- Tuttle Creek Lake

Manhattan KS CBC checklist									
d Hawks		Pigeons, doves & owls		Manhattan CBC Report		Mark Mayfield		cardinal	
Heron		Rock Pigeon		Golden-crowned Kinglet		Longspur sp			
		Eurasian Collared-Dove		Ruby-crowned Kinglet		Snow Bunting			
		White-winged Dove		Thrushes, starling, waxwings		Northern Cardinal		20	
		Mourning Dove		Eastern Bluebird					
(m.)		Barn Owl		19					

The **69th annual Manhattan Kansas Christmas Bird Count** was conducted on December, 16 2017. A total of 56 individuals participated, including 3 who exclusively watched at feeders. The 53 field participants in 25 parties logged a total of 563 miles and 123.7 hours, including 51 mi and 48 hrs by foot, in addition to 3 and 11 hours for owling and feeder watching, respectively. Weather conditions were quite mild, with morning lows at or just below freezing, and highs topping out around 64°F. Skies were generally clear to partly cloudy, with light south to southwest winds in the early morning and evening, reaching about 20 mph by late morning, and waning through the afternoon to near calm by the end of the birding day.

A total of 88 species was recorded including 39,133 individual birds. Both of these numbers are on the low end compared to recent years. Three more species were added during the count week (3 days before and after count day). The most unusual sightings for the count included a single **Sandhill Crane** at Rocky Ford, seen by several observers, and a **Northern Shrike** on the Konza Prairie Biological Station. A Northern Shrike had been detected and photographed there 4 days earlier by David Rintoul (see eBird). A single Blue-winged Teal was also an unexpected rarity for this time of year. New high numbers were obtained for Myrtle Warbler (214) and Pileated Woodpecker(8), and the count of 7 for Red-Shouldered Hawk matched a previous high that occurred in 1955, the only year this species had been detected on Manhattan's CBC prior to 2012.

Other good finds were 17 Greater Prairie Chicken, 7 Merlin, 2 Pied-billed Grebe, 2 Prairie Falcon, 13 Bonaparte's Gull, 1 Marsh Wren, 7 Hermit Thrush, 8 Savannah Sparrow, and 19 Rusty Blackbird. By recent standards, also notable were 63 Bobwhite and 516 Harris's Sparrow. Good numbers of raptors were also present, including the 193 Red-tailed Hawks and 29 Kestrels. The biggest misses in this year's count were: Spotted Towhee, seen 61 of 69 count years and last missed in 1971, and Purple Finch, seen 51 of 69 years, with 2001 the last year it was missed. Bufflehead, with only 5 other misses since 1977, and Lincoln's Sparrow, seen 44 of 69 count years, are also significant misses.

Other notable misses were Ring-necked Pheasant, Herring Gull, Wilson's Snipe (cw), Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Brewers Blackbird. The introduced Pheasant has been rare and unreliable in the count circle in the last couple of decades while the others in the latter list are annually somewhat erratic, or declining recently. The warm weather may account for both the unusual presence (Blue-winged Teal) or high counts of some species, as well as the lack of others that were missed or in low numbers. Waterfowl counts were generally low (7 Gadwall, 134 Common Merganser) and some relatively commonly encountered species were not detected (e.g., American Coot, Bufflehead). Wigeon, Shoveler, Pintail and Canvasback have become less common on the count in recent years, but have been historically more reliable.

We were all disappointed that a Snowy Owl didn't show in our area during the count despite several sightings in the area. The 2017 Manhattan was a great success thanks to many contributors. We appreciate the efforts of all involved in counting, and especially that of our area coordinators/co-compilers (Doris Burnett, Alice Boyle, Jim Koelliker/Clyde Ferguson, David Rintoul, and Ed Pembleton). I am grateful to all who helped pull together this first year with me as compiler. Thanks are especially due to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society for hosting the compilation and Chili supper. I look forward to next year and hope you do as well!

Mark H. Mayfield  
Compiler for the 69th annual Manhattan Kansas Christmas Bird Count, Dec. 16, 2017



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

Published monthly (except August) by the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.  
Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520. (cinraney@ksu.edu)  
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, 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

#### NFHAS Board

President: Patricia Yeager - [pyeagerbirder@gmail.com](mailto:pyeagerbirder@gmail.com) 776-9593  
Vice Pres. MJ Morgan - [morganmjt2@gmail.com](mailto:morganmjt2@gmail.com)  
Secretary:  
Treasurer: Carla Bishop - [carla.kay.bishop@gmail.com](mailto:carla.kay.bishop@gmail.com)

#### COMMITTEE Chairs:

Membership:  
Programs: Kevin Fay  
Conservation:  
Butterfly Garden:  
Alsop Property: Patricia Yeager - [pyeagerbirder@gmail.com](mailto:pyeagerbirder@gmail.com) 776-9593

#### Education:

#### Land Preservation:

#### Bird Seed Sales:

Newsletter: Cindy Jeffrey - [cinraney@ksu.edu](mailto:cinraney@ksu.edu) 565-3326  
Fieldtrips: Patricia Yeager, Kevin Fay 776-9593  
At-large: Tom Morgan

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. Jerry Moran U.S. Capital Switchboard 202-224-3121.