

White-crowned
Sparrow.
By N. John
Schmitt.

JAS Jayhawk Audubon Society

www.jayhawkaudubon.org



Backyard Birds in Winter and Project FeederWatch Blog to debut on JAS website!

We've had lots of new visitors to our website the last few months. To encourage this growing interest in birds, webmaster Lynn Byczynski is developing new content/resources to familiarize people with our area feeder birds. Plus, a new blog from Jennifer Delisle will chronicle a season participating in Project FeederWatch and the absorbing rewards of paying attention to your backyard wildlife.

Learn about joining Project FeederWatch on page 7. Perhaps you would enjoy feeder watching for the Christmas Bird Count. More about that on page 6. →→

Stock Up at the JAS Seed Sale: Saturday, Nov. 7th 10AM ~ 1 PM

- Our **ONLY** sale of the season
- **New location** in Cottin's back parking lot; enter just east of 19th & New Hampshire;
- Masks required; everything outside
★ ★ Walk-ins welcome!

Saturday, Nov. 7th is our only Seed and feeder sale this year—the weather is too unpredictable in December/January to plan on outside sales. We'll have all the excellent seed, books and feeders you're used to. If Grinter's sunflower seed is ready, we'll have that. You can pay at the sale with check, cash, or card. It's time to stock up on seed & buy bird lover gifts!

If you're good at social distancing, we can use you as a volunteer. Email Jan Bresnahan: jan50bres@yahoo.com. We'll still be loading your car while keeping our distance. We'll be wearing masks and respectfully request that you do too. Hope to see your smiling eyes on the 7th!

Monday, November 23rd

The Kansas River: Protect, Advocate & Discover

The Kansas River is the longest prairie-based river in the world. The river drains 61,000 square miles including the upper half of Kansas, central Nebraska and eastern Colorado and is a drinking water source for 800,000 Kansans. Friends of the Kaw is the only non-profit dedicated to protecting and preserving the 173-mile long river. In July, 2020 a small group of paddlers kayaked from Junction City to Kaw Point in KC on the KAW 173. Join us on 11/23 to hear Dawn Buehler, Kansas Riverkeeper and Executive Director FOK, speak about that trip, the group's recent work and plans for the future.

In her role as Kansas Riverkeeper, Dawn works to hold the community accountable for the river's health, acts to resolve pollution concerns, advocates for the Kansas River and its environs, educates the public, and provides outreach activities to connect people with the river. She holds a BS in Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife Conservation from Oregon State and a Bachelor's in Business Administration from Baker. Dawn is Chair of the Kansas Basin Regional Advisory Committee for the Kansas Water Vision and serves on the KS Land Trust board and the board of the KS Alliance for Wetlands and Streams.



Dawn in her kayak on the Kaw ~ her happy place,

➤➤➤ To attend the 11/23 program, go to our home page www.jayhawkaudubon.org "Latest Events" section at 6:50-6:55 pm and click on the underlined link in the program note. Then follow the Zoom instructions .



Marty Birrell, Director of Prairie Park Nature Center and faithful Eagles Day presenter with Bunnie Watkins, Eagles Day Chair, channeling their inner eagles at Eagles Day 2020.

Black Jack Thank You & Seed Cleaning

A number of JAS members have contributed muscle power at Black Jack Prairie Restoration work days fulfilling the chapter's pledge to support the project with volunteer work hours. **THANK YOU VERY MUCH.** GHF did not give us names, so we can't give credit that way, but you know who you are, and the JAS board truly appreciates your efforts! The birds that come to live and breed in that prairie will be your living reward.

There will be one last work day this fall to clean seeds collected at previous work days:

Saturday, November 21 11 am ~ 1 pm

**Kill Creek Park, Shelter 1
11670 Homestead Lane, Olathe, KS 66061**

No experience necessary; experts will be there to advise. For safety it will be outdoors with masks & distancing and limited to 30 volunteers. Details and to RSVP: <https://www.grasslandheritage.org/blackjack>.



Prairie restoration experiment at Free State High School

Eagles Day Update

January 2021 will mark the 25th Anniversary of the first Kaw Valley Eagles Day! The Eagles Day Committee was planning for a celebratory event, but, of course, Covid-19 upended those visions. The committee is tentatively planning some online presentations, but nothing is finalized at this time. We'll tell you what's on tap in the January newsletter.

In 2022 we'll hold the 25th Annual Kaw Valley Eagles Day and, as always, invite the whole community and beyond! So get out the calendar you recently received from National Audubon (or one of the 4 or 5 or ?? other environmental organizations you belong to), flip to the end of December 2021 and write yourself a reminder to go to Eagles Day in 2022. See...those calendars are good for something besides school art projects after all.

JAS Officers & Board Members

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785-766-9625 or jbresnahan@ku.edu
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Christmas Count: Galen Pittman
Eagles Day: Bunnie Watkins
Hospitality: Phyllis Fantini
Historian: Ron Wolf
Books & Feeders: Ron & Joyce Wolf
Audubon of Kansas Chapter Rep: Ron Wolf

Trouble for the River Right Here in River City

THE GOOD NEWS: The city is making much needed repairs to the dam across the Kaw in downtown Lawrence and to a retaining wall on the south bank to fill scour holes. There are also some great access projects (fishing, access terraces, kayak access, etc.) proposed for this area that will help people appreciate our beautiful Kaw. (Lawrence Journal World, 10/25/20)

THE BAD NEWS: In building the access road to the repair site, the contractor scraped off existing river-bank to make the road instead of bringing in fill to make it as they were supposed to. Lisa Grossman, Friends of the Kaw board member (& former JAS board member), sent out the alert along with these photos showing that this has created a massive amount of destabilization in an already vulnerable riparian area. Lisa says, "Imagine the next heavy rains or river flooding again. Go see for yourself and reach out to our city officials with concerns." She also notes that the river is important habitat for eagles and "ironically there was an immature eagle sitting in the tree that will eventually erode out."

Contact info for the city commission is at: <https://lawrenceks.civicweb.net/portal/members.aspx?id=10>. Tell commissioners there needs to be effective mitigation immediately to protect water quality & wildlife.





Juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker. Note brown head with red feathers coming in. By Jim Bresnahan.

The Holey Woods

I find the forests and woodlands of eastern Kansas the neatest places to hike, neat in the figurative sense, not the literal. Our natural forests are not orderly and tidy places. They are awash with burls, tree deformities and excrescences, dead-fall logs, snags and cavities in trees. Tree cavities are particularly important wildlife resources contributing to the richness and abundance of species and the biodiversity of woodlands.

There are two types of tree cavities: natural ones, produced by injury from wind, ice, tree fall, lightning and other natural forces, and cavities made by excavators such as flickers, downy, hairy, redheaded, and pileated woodpeckers. Woodpecker holes are the most useful for wildlife since, created to shelter different sizes of woodpeckers, they subsequently accommodate a variety of sizes of secondary cavity nesters. Cavity trees are used for nesting to rear broods and litters, roosting, food storage, winter shelter and many other activities. More than 23 species of birds and 10 species of mammals may use tree cavities in Kansas. Birds include all resident woodpeckers, wood ducks, kestrels, owls, wrens, bluebirds, prothonotary warblers, black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice, white-breasted nuthatches, great-crowned flycatchers and tree swallows. Mammals include opossums, several species of bats, gray and fox squirrels, southern flying squirrels, chipmunks, white-footed and deer mice and raccoons. In addition many invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles also use tree cavities

I encourage you to go slow, be patient and search for cavities when you hike in the woodlands. What your eyes don't see your mind's eye may. A whole lot of creatures use a tree hole.

~ Jim Bresnahan

Already Dreaming About Next Summer?

Plants for Birds has an inspiration for your next yard makeover. Check out Arizona's (the world's?) first bird-friendly beer garden: <https://tinyurl.com/yxjdf17t> Arizona Wilderness Brewing Company has been working with Audubon's Western Rivers Action Network for years on water issues. Now they've partnered with Audubon Arizona and Plants for Birds to create a native plant beer garden in Phoenix. Goes to show gardening with native plants doesn't have to restrict your imagination. Raise a glass to these bird-loving brewers!

Hidden Valley Camp, a jewel in the heart of Lawrence, is a holey wood!

The Friends of Hidden Valley invite you to their Fall Workday on:
November 8 from 11 am to 5 pm
(rain date: November 15)

Register by November 5:

Family groups or other quarantine pods are welcome and encouraged. Register by November 5th by contacting Cindy Riling: cariling@aol.com. She will assign time slots and work tasks so that social distancing can be maintained. You may request a preferred time slot and Cindy will try her best to assign you that time. Visit the Friends website: <https://www.friendshv.org/>



Juvenile Black-capped Chickadee in nest hole. Denoted by creamy breast rather than white breast of an adult.

By Jim Bresnahan

Birds Are on the Move in Kansas

Summer birds are winging through from further north and winter birds are arriving to cheer us up. Join the Kansas Birding Facebook group to get current bird news from all over the state along with pictures that will up your bird ID ability:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KSbirds>

This is a private group so you have to join to see posts. It's friendly and respectful and usually upbeat, a welcome haven in the social media landscape.

Here's what fellow birders are seeing:

★ Black-billed Magpies and Short-eared Owls in Salina

★ Common Loons at Cedar Lake in Olathe

★ Western Grebes at Tuttle Lake

★ Trumpeter Swans at Lake Olathe

★★★ Avocets, White-faced Ibis, Black-bellied Plovers, Canvasbacks and many other ducks, thousands of White-fronted and Snow Geese, tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes and 11 Whoopers at Quivira NWR. Time for a trip?

★ Black Scoters at Perry Lake

★ Harris's Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos all over

★★ And the whipped cream on the sundae: American Woodcocks on migration were halted in their flight by the 10/25-27 snowfall and cold. There have been at least 18 reports on the KS birding FB page from 11 counties. These normally uber secretive birds are just hunkering down in the open in people's yards poking around for worms to eat and waiting for better weather to continue on south. Thankfully they are expected to survive and be on the way to their wintering grounds in a day or two.



Black-billed Magpie.
By Amanda Ubell
Audubon Photography Awards.

2020 Celebration of Cranes

November 4-7 ~ A Virtual Event

Sponsored by Audubon of Kansas

Celebration of Cranes opens a window on the amazing assemblage of cranes and other waterfowl that gather at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge during fall migration. Thousands of Sandhill Cranes have descended on the refuge at Quivira to break their migration and refuel in late October and early November in recent years.

The wetlands and shallow waters of the refuge provide the most important spring and fall migratory stopover habitat for federally endangered Whooping Cranes. They feed and rest at the refuge during the arduous 2,500-mile migration between their nesting territory in Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Canada and their wintering habitat within the Aransas NWR on the Texas Gulf Coast.

Please join us November 4-7 as we stream our five speakers who will cover a range of topics:

- the history of Quivira
- the importance of wetlands for shorebirds
- the nutrition necessary for migration
- the comeback of the endangered Whooping Crane (from 21 birds to over 800 today)
- the unique geology and necessary water of this wetland

Go to the AOK website, audubonofkansas.org, for an event schedule and how to join the Celebration of Cranes event November 2020. Also find out more about AOK, and how to support our work.

~ Audubon of Kansas



3 Sandhills and a Whooper. Diane Constable. Wikimedia.

2020 LAWRENCE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Galen L. Pittman, Lawrence CBC compiler

Lawrence CBC 2020, the 77th Audubon Christmas Bird Count held in Lawrence, will be Saturday, December 19th. Last year's species total of 89 was a good effort, but we have achieved 100 species seven times in the last ten years, perhaps we can do it again! **Because of the Covid pandemic and the need to practice safe social distancing, we have to significantly modify the way we conduct this year's count.** The first change is that we will NOT meet at day's end for a compilation dinner, as has been the tradition for the more than 40 years I have been doing this count. Sorry, no JAS Audubon chili this year!

A CBC takes place in a count circle 15 miles in diameter and all birds seen or heard in the circle are counted during one 24-hour period (midnight to midnight). The circle is divided up into pre-assigned territories that don't overlap, so there is no double counting. Many party leaders have had the same territories year after year & some participants have done the count for two or three decades running! We typically have 30 to 40 field participants in 10-12 parties, with each party usually covering their territory together in a single car. We also have several people that watch their feeders and yards on count day and submit those counts.

Normally, new participants are encouraged whether or not they have any CBC experience. I don't expect them to do the count on their own the first time, and I find them a spot in an existing party. However, during the pandemic I will not be asking party leaders to take on ANY "new" people, particularly because of the risk in sharing a closed vehicle for hours. So, first time field participants WILL NOT be recruited for the Lawrence count this year. **However, I AM encouraging new people to participate this year by watching their feeders and yards and submitting those counts to me to be included in the CBC compiled totals.**

Of course, the feeders/yard you plan to watch and count birds for on December 19th need to be located within the count circle! The center of the Lawrence count circle is located about 1½ miles north of US 40 just south of I-70 and about ¼ mile east of the junction of Dg Co E.1000 Rd (Queens Rd) and N. 1750 Rd (38.993, -95.311). The circle covers most of Clinton Lake, all of the city of Lawrence including Baker Wetlands, the Fitch Natural History Reservation, the towns of Perry and Lecompton, and the Kansas River valley from just west of Lecompton to just east of Lawrence.

If you want to be a feeder watcher for some part of the day (owling is encouraged!), it is important to contact me before the count. All that is needed is a tally of each bird species with the max number seen, number of observers, and the total number of "man-hours" that the feeders were watched during the day. Also, it is important to not just keep adding up the number of birds you see at one time, over and over. Be conservative, try to estimate the total maximum number of each species for the entire time you watched. Of course, if you have four male and three female Northern Cardinals in the morning, and have two males and five females in the afternoon, you know you have at least nine not just the seven you saw at one time. I may not see more than 3 or 4 total cardinals during the day at my feeders, but at sunset when the cardinals are the last species to come feed for day, I can easily see 10-12 at once. Any birds you see in your yard, on count day, should be counted, not just those at the feeders.

If you are interested text or email me, before the count, at (785) 760-3572 or galenpitt@gmail.com.

The Baldwin CBC Is Wednesday, 12/16.

If you would like to participate, contact compiler Cal Cink: ccinkbird76@gmail.com and he will try to make it happen. A CBC is like a giant scavenger hunt where you get to call out what you're hunting for. In the right habitat you might say, "We need a mockingbird" or "We haven't seen a harrier yet", and then, sometimes, the bird pops out of a brush pile or comes over the horizon. Nature's magic...making you whoop for joy.

Project FeederWatch: Perfect Citizen Science for a Covid Winter

Project FeederWatch is for adults, kids, families, anyone with any sort of bird feeder—although in fact you don't even need a feeder. You can count birds attracted to your count site, which could be your yard or another place you watch birds, by water, shelter or plantings as well as feeders. When most natural water is frozen, a bird bath may even be more attractive to birds than a feeder.



PFW starts this year on November 14 and ends April 9. You can join any time you want, but your data will be more interesting & useful the sooner you start. There is a \$18 fee to participate. (\$15 if you are already a member of The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the sponsor along with Bird Life Canada.) Sign up on the website at <http://feederwatch.org/>. Results are reported through their website. It's a terrific activity for families.

PFW stresses that all the data collected by feeder watchers is important to give a true picture of bird populations. So don't decide it's not worth reporting your count if you just have a few common species coming to your feeders or even if you have few or no birds coming for awhile. Those reports are also important to prevent skewing of the data toward unusual sightings or impressive large flocks.

Worried that you're not expert at IDing birds? Never fear! PFW sends a Research Kit with instructions, bird ID poster and more. Also the JAS website now has a section featuring Jim Bresnahan's beautiful, sharp photos to help you identify our 25 most common local backyard birds, including hawks! The PFW website also has an enormous cache of resources for kids and adults—maps, labelled photos from feeder watchers, FeederWatch cams, projects for kids—to help you figure out that unknown bird and have fun. AND Jennifer Delisle will be blogging about her local FeederWatch experiences and ready to answer questions.

Finally, if it just seems too restrictive or time consuming to follow PFW counting protocols or you don't want to pay to join PFW, please still use the resources on the JAS and PFW websites to help you enjoy, identify, and learn about your feeder birds. This will deepen your pleasure and make your feeder watching much more rewarding.

Family Adventures at Prairie Park Nature Center

GEMINID METEOR SHOWER VIEWING: 6:30-8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20. Ages 8 and Up.

Come along for the greatest show seen from Earth. The Geminid is one of the best meteor showers of the year. Join us for an informal talk about the night skies before we go out to view the shower.

Please dress for the weather. Registration is required.

WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION: 9:30-11 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12. Ages 10 and Up.

Bring the family out to celebrate the Winter Solstice. Learn about the Solstice, make Solstice ornaments and burn a yule log. The group will also go out for a short owling experience. Registration is required.

Participants under 15 years-old must be accompanied by a registered adult.

Register using the links at <https://lawrenceks.org/lprd/ppnc/programs/public/#4>

Jayhawk Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3741
Lawrence, KS 66046
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Become a Member: Just \$20 to join both National Audubon and Jayhawk Chapter.

National Audubon Society membership is \$20.00. Members receive four issues per year of the Audubon magazine and will be enlisted as members of their closest chapter. Members also receive 9 issues per year of the JAS newsletter and are entitled to discounts on the books and feeders we sell to raise funds to support education and conservation projects. (Make your check payable to National Audubon Society and mail to our JAS membership chair at the address below.) You may also join National Audubon online at https://secure.audubon.org/site/Donation2?df_id=9431&9431.donation=form1&s_src=2015_AUDHP_topbanner-button-menu.)

Chapter-only membership to Jayhawk Audubon Society is \$10.00. (Make check payable to Jayhawk Audubon Society.) You will not receive the Audubon magazine. *Those with National Audubon memberships are encouraged to support the chapter by voluntarily paying these dues.* Chapter membership expires annually in July. JAS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

To join or donate to Audubon of Kansas make check payable to AOK or use this online link - <http://www.audubonofkansas.org/joindonate/>.

Please send this completed form & your check to JAS c/o Kristine Latta, P.O. Box 3741
Lawrence, KS 66046.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code (9) digit _____

Telephone (with Area Code) _____

Email address _____

Jayhawk Audubon does not share membership information with non-Audubon entities. C6ZJ020Z