JAS 50th Anniversary!

Celebration dinner at Maceli’s

April 27th

Block the date on your calendar now! John Rowden, National Audubon Senior Director of Bird-Friendly Communities, will speak about Plants for Birds. Menu and other details aren’t finalized yet but they will be posted on the JAS website and FB page later this month. Watch those spaces for RSVP details.

50 years of birding Jayhawks is a proud milestone. Join us to indulge in some joyful preening on April 27th!

First Friday Birding

Cabin fever have you eager to roam? Lucky for you there will be a low-key JAS bird walk on the first Friday of each month this winter/spring at a local Lawrence site. Meet trip leader Molly Zahn at 8:00 AM and walk looking for birds for 1.5 – 2 hours. All levels welcome!

Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Dates are: March 6, April 3, and May 1. Watch Facebook or the JAS listserv for each month’s location. Questions can be directed to Molly at mzahn@ku.edu.

This month’s trip will be March 6
Meet at the Baker Wetlands east side parking lot off Haskell Avenue at 8 AM.

Monday, March 23rd

Peruvian Wildlife

In summer 2019, Jim Bresnahan and daughters Jenna Johnson and Erin Paden traveled to Peru visiting Cusco, many Incan ruins, including Machu Picchu, and Rainbow Mountain. They then spent 9 days in Manu National Park, a ten thousand square mile UNESCO World Heritage Site, purportedly the most biodiverse area on the planet. Manu spans the cloud forest of the eastern Andes and the Amazon basin, sheltering 5,000 species of plants; 160 species of mammals including the extremely endangered giant otter; 1,000 species of birds; and almost 300 species of amphibians and reptiles.

Jenna and Erin went home after the Manu adventure while Jim went on to Arequipa and the Colca Canyon, home to Andean condors and vicunas, wild relatives of llamas and alpacas. Social unrest stymied a further trip to Lake Titicaca. Join us on March 23rd to enjoy a photographic and video tour of the wildlife of Peru’s mountains, grasslands and rainforest.

Jim received a B.A. in Biology from Southern Illinois University, a D.V.M degree from the University of Illinois and a post-doctoral M.S. from the University of Missouri. In addition to three years of veterinary practice in his hometown of Granite City, Illinois, he was University Veterinarian and Director of Veterinary Services at Duke University for 5 years and University Veterinarian and Director of the Animal Care Unit at the University of Kansas for 25 years before his retirement in 2009. He was privileged to be the veterinarian for a rare prosimian primate center while at Duke and a wildlife rehabilitation program while at KU.
Seed Sale Good News Bad News

This Seed Sale season was bittersweet for JAS volunteers. It was great to be back in the center of downtown action at the Senior Resource Center and always good fun to chat and geek out about birds with our wonderful supporters when they pick up their seed. That was the sweet part.

The bitter part was knowing that this was Linda Lips last season as Seed Sale Chair. Linda has served for over 15 years (she says it’s been 100…), a long span of dedication to a volunteer job that takes hours of work before the sale and then on the day entails a lot of hard physical work and last-minute problem solving. And ask Linda some time about her love of storing seed between sales….

Linda innovated the welcoming custom of offering cookies and juice to seed sale patrons, turning the event into a friendly gathering rather than just a fund raiser. It was also her idea to play bird song, transforming the sales into a birder’s happy place. We are so going to miss Linda and her calm efficiency, quirky humor & utter reliability. Thank you Linda for years of commitment to raising funds for the JAS conservation education mission! But hey, Linda—-you do realize you’re not totally off the hook—we still expect you to show up at the sales and buy massive amounts of bird seed!

Of course Linda is the first one to emphasize that sales can’t be successful without loyal volunteers to unload the delivery truck, tote bird seed for customers, advise on field guides and feeders, cashier, and welcome our supporters. This year we thank: Dana Adkins-Heljeson, Jim Bresnahan, Lynn Byczynski, Dave Chaffee, Pam Chaffee, Jennifer Delisle, Bill Dodd, Phyllis Fantini, Susan Iversen, Wayne Kennedy, Carrie Lindsey, Emily Lysen, Rich Lysen, Susan MacNally, McKay Stangler, Julie Trowbridge-Alford, Joyce Wolf and Ron Wolf. You are ALL AWESOME!

Thanks also to SRC staff Megan Poindexter & Stefanie Macfarlane for help with arrangements in the new space and for checking during sales to make sure things were going well. SRC’s Michelle Meier was especially helpful with publicity, announcing sales in their magazine, and actually creating beautiful special ads for us.

Linda also wants to thank Roger Tuckel at Lawrence Feed & Farm Supply for more than once helping out in a big way when we were in a pinch. Tarwater Farm & Home in Topeka, our main supplier, and Ted Grinter, local sunflower whisperer, have been terrific to work with over the years.

Join the JAS Listserv

- Get brief reminders of meetings and other events, but only a couple per month.
- Get the newsletter in your inbox as a full-color PDF each month, often with extra content.
- Help us go electronic and reduce our carbon footprint. We don’t yet have enough member email addresses to forgo a paper newsletter.

Just email jayhawkaudubon@earthlink.net and ask to be added to the listserv. Then add us to your contact list and that’s it. You can ask to be removed from the list at any time.

** New Membership Chair **

Kristine Latta has volunteered to take over as Membership Chair from Wayne Kennedy. The JAS board is grateful to her for stepping up so quickly as this will allow more time for a smooth handover of duties. Promoting Audubon membership and keeping accurate records of our member roster is crucial, making Membership Chair a key post.

The board is grateful to Wayne for his work on membership the last two years. National has been very slow to process new memberships, but Wayne has persevered to keep chapter lists current. He puts in a lot of time making the mailing labels for the newsletter and getting them out in a timely manner. He’s also a great birder—always worth extra points! Thank you, Wayne for your service as Membership Chair.

Catherine Clark.
Birdwatcher’s General Store
The 24th Annual Eagles Day on January 18th was a success, attested by smiling faces, engaged kids, and adults asking lots of questions. A huge shout-out to the Eagles Day committee: Chair Bunnie Watkins, Samantha Jones, Army Corps of Engineers, Pam Chaffee, Joyce Wolf, Dena Friesen (who designs our striking posters), Marty Birrell, Janette Haak, Susan MacNally, Vanessa Carlos, and Mike Watkins, who donated his gorgeous Bald Eagle photos to the event. Marty and Mike also gave entertaining and educational presentations on raptors and Bald Eagle nesting in Kansas. USD 497 Science Coordinator, Mindy Mesler, smoothed our way with the district, and Free State HS custodians and food service personnel helped tremendously on the day. Thank you all very much!

**Many thanks to the Sponsors & In-kind Contributors to Eagles Day:**

Jayhawk Audubon Society
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Lawrence Public Schools
KS Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism~
Chickadee Checkoff Program
The Home Depot
Evergy Green Team
ICL Performance Products, LP
City of Lawrence Public Works
Lawrence Antique Mall
Free State Brewing Company
Sunflower Outdoor and Bike Shop
Weaver’s Department Store
Great Harvest Bread Company
Mike Watkins

Our sponsors have faithfully supported Eagles Day for years! The event wouldn’t happen without them. Please tell them you appreciate them when you are out and about shopping and dining.
Amendments Proposed to the JAS Constitution & By-Laws

The JAS board recently reviewed the Society’s Constitution and By-Laws and determined that several changes are needed to bring the documents in line with current practices. Specifically:

- Amend the mission statement to match current aspirations and publications.
- Amend the section on scheduling of general meetings to be less prescriptive on meeting frequency and dates so the Society has more flexibility to respond to changing needs.
- Drop the requirement that the immediate past president serve on the board of directors as the last several presidents have been unable to do so. This would not prohibit past presidents from serving in some capacity if they want.

These amendments will be voted on at the next general meeting on March 23rd. To read the proposed text, please visit the Jayhawk Audubon Society website: [www.jayhawkaudubon.org](http://www.jayhawkaudubon.org).

Urgent: Letters needed to Protect The Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Deadline for comments is March 19th

(We’re reprinting this alert from February because it is so important for citizens to tell USFWS that this rule change is totally unacceptable and wrong. Please write your letter today.)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to gut the century old MBTA by no longer holding businesses accountable for “incidental” bird deaths in oil waste pits, tailing ponds, transmission lines etc. The proposed new rule gives business a pass on the killings by removing enforcement and incentives for companies to adopt practices to protect birds from such hazards. It also eliminates MBTA penalties for companies that kill substantial numbers of birds, even for large oil spills such as Deepwater Horizon, thus removing all restraints. Penalty money is key in funding recovery efforts.

Comments opposing the change will be accepted from Feb. 3 to March 19. BUT please note that the USFWS does not accept email comments. You can go to the National Audubon website: [https://www.audubon.org/](https://www.audubon.org/) and click the “Act Now” pop-up box or the “Take Action” button and submit a comment. They have a sample letter to get you started. National will convert the comments into written letters and deliver them all together to the USFWS.

* * * * *

OR send a letter by U.S. mail to:

Public Comments Processing
Attn: FWS-HQ-MB-2018-0090
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; MS: JAO/1N
5275 Leesburg Pike;
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Thank you for speaking up!

Migratory Spotted Sandpipers will soon be back to breed in Kansas.

Illustration from a Gutenberg Project ebook.
Did You Know?
Natures Nuptials ~ A Valentine’s Sampler
By Jim Bresnahan

February, factually the shortest month, is psychologically the longest. We are longing for the end of winter and the arrival of March and spring. We are comforted by a Valentine’s Day celebration in the middle of the month. On this occasion couples express their love for one another by offering gifts. This is akin to and perhaps a behavioral continuation of pre-nuptial gifting such as the presentation of a ring. We use such gifting to woo a potential mate and to strengthen bonds with present partners.

Gifting is pervasive among certain insects, spiders, and birds as well. For example, the nesting web spider gives his potential mate the entomological equivalent of a Valentine’s chocolate sampler: a live insect wrapped in silk. If it is a substantial gift, one she can sink her teeth—or rather her chelicerae—into, while she consumes he can consummate. However, if he has selfishly sampled a caramel he may become her nougat.

In the laboratory setting female praying mantises often eat the head of the males during copulation. It has been found that this only happens about 30% of the time in the wild as the males apparently look for large, fat females with satisfied appetites before mating. Eating the head of the male provides nutrients to produce eggs but may serve another purpose: the cranial ganglia controlling behavior and the abdominal ganglia controlling the actual process of copulation and insemination are separate. Thus deprived of the inhibiting brain the male’s copulation and insemination keeps on going and going like a decapitated Duracell bunny.

Nuptial gifting is highly developed in birds. Many birds practice courtship feeding where the male metaphorically takes the female to a fancy restaurant to impress her. In action this takes the form of presenting normal food items based on the bird’s normal diet. One of the coolest of birds, the penguin, dresses in a formal tuxedo and ostentatiously presents his potential bride with a rock as would an affluent human suitor. But it is literally a rock. Much more elaborate gifting is displayed by bowerbirds which dress up in a lavish costume of feathery froufrou, perform sophisticated balletic dances and build an avian Taj Majal for potential mates

Nature’s Nuptials continued:
There seems to be a paucity of gifting behavior in mammals. Our closest primate relatives instead of giving presents remove a presence: grooming the fur to remove ectoparasites such as ticks and lice. Some primate species spend over 20% of their time in grooming. Besides the health benefits of controlling disease transmission such behavior serves an important function in social bonding. Although I think it is a lousy way to show affection, some scientists theorize that such grooming behavior may be the root of our language development. Instead of nit picking we began chit chatting to socially bond.

Considering all the interesting and diverse approaches to gifting in the natural world, I am very pleased that my wife enjoys flowers.

Is a Museum Summer Camp in Your Child’s Future? Time to Sign Up!
KU Natural History Museum one day camps:
June 8: Forensic Fun 10 a—3 p
June 10: Science Palooza 10 a—3 p
June 12: Expedition: Forest Floor 10 a—3 p

Sternberg Museum Summer Camps:
The Sternberg Museum in Fort Hays offers first rate science camps for middle and high schoolers. See websites for details. Application materials must be in by May 2nd.

http://sternberg.fhsu.edu/active-learning/camps/high-school/  Some of the HS choices are:
Southwest Wildlife Biology (Colorado)  Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy
Field Volcanology (in Oregon)  Science Communication & Online Journalism

http://sternberg.fhsu.edu/active-learning/camps/middleschool/  Middle School camps include:
Desert Naturalists (Colorado)  Prairie Naturalists (KS)
Paleontology Explorers (KS)  Marine Naturalists (OR)

Gentoo Penguin gifting a rock to it’s mate.
David Moir. Reuters
We don't just look at birds—we watch them, and we watch them because they're always doing things.

Birds are lovers and fighters, singers and dancers, hunters and players.

Kenn Kaufman

Bird Walks, Book Talks, Garden Thoughts, Even Bird Art ~ Enjoy!

Wed. 3/4: Trees Shrubs and Woody Vines in Kansas. Craig Freeman, Senior Scientist KS Biological Survey. 7:30-8:30 pm. Lawrence Public Library.


Thu. 3/5: Ask the Native Plant Expert. Lawrence Public Library. 12-1:00 pm. Other dates will be: March 11 from 5:30-6:30 pm; March 16 from 4:30 –5:30 pm; March 18 from 5:30-6:30 pm; March 25 from 5:30-6:30 pm. Also the library has free seeds.

Fri. 3/6: First Friday Bird Walk. 8:00 am. Baker Wetlands east parking lot off Haskell. Contact leader Molly Zahn: mzahn@ku.edu. See page 1.

Sat. 3/7: Discussion of Engage, Connect, Protect: Empowering Diverse Youth as Environmental Leaders: The new book by Angelou Ezeilo. 3-5 pm. Lawrence Public Library Meeting Room A.

Sat. 3/14: Citizen’s Climate Lobby Meeting. 11 am—1 pm. Usually at Lawrence Public Library but contact Chair Tony Schmidt for location: tschmidt@eaglecom.net.

Wed. 3/18: Nature Book Club. 6:30-8:00 pm. Lawrence Public Library Meeting Room A. Share a nature or environment related read—fiction or nonfiction. Contact Shirley: sbraunlich@lplks.org.


Sat. 3/21: Pop-up Science: Marine Mammals. 10:00 am—12:00 pm. KU Natural History Museum.

Sat. 3/21: Mason Bees & Pollinators. 5:30 - 6:30 pm. Wild Birds Unlimited. 11711 Roe Ave. Leawood, KS. Learn about native Mason Bees and how to help them thrive in your yard. Note they rarely sting! https://kansascity.wbu.com/in-store-events. Free and open to all.


Mon. 3/23: Wildlife of Peru. JAS program. 7:00 pm. Baker Wetlands Discovery Center. See page 1.

Sat. 3/28: Tomahawk Creek Park Bird Walk. 8:00 am. Wild Birds Unlimited, Leawood. Free but must sign up at https://kansascity.wbu.com/bird-walk. Limited number of spaces.

Fri. 4/3: First Friday Bird Walk. 8:00 am. Location TBD. Contact leader Molly Zahn: mzahn@ku.edu

Sun. 4/5: Wakarusa Wetlands Celebration. 2–4 pm. Haskell Indian Nations University Medicine Wheel. Authors and artists share wetlands connections. Dress for the weather. You may want a chair or blanket. https://lawrence.bibliocommons.com/events/5de98382eb99c2f0052ea4a

Mon. 4/27: JAS 50th Anniversay Celebration Dinner at Maceli’s. Save the date! See page 1
I had planned this month to review the much-buzzed-about *A Short Philosophy of Birds*, by Philippe Dubois and Elise Rousseau. But I so disliked it, with its bumper-sticker life-coaching affixed awkwardly to elementary observations, that I will not waste your time.

Let me instead draw your attention to a different volume, one I insist you buy immediately. I’m completely serious: drop this newsletter, call the Raven Bookstore, and order this book. It is *that* good. It is *that* beautiful. It is the very opposite of a waste of your time; indeed, I’m hard-pressed to think of things more worth doing than reading this book.

The book is *As Kingfishers Catch Fire: Books & Birds*, by the English writer Alex Preston, with vivid illustrations by Neil Gower. The title is of course a reference to Gerard Manley Hopkins, the English poet and Jesuit priest who saw great overlap between nature and religion—a stance many of us would surely cheer. Preston’s book defies easy categorization—is it memoir? anthology? ornithological-literary flaneuring?—but is always stirring in its evocations of bird life and human efforts to capture beauty in words.

The book surveys 21 species, ranging from peregrine to nightingale, and examines each through writers’ and poets’ attempts to describe it, appreciate it, and celebrate it. The book is worth reading for the excerpts alone; rarely have so many lovely poetic words about birds been assembled outside of a formal anthology.

But beyond that, Preston is such an earnest and amiable guide—by turns erudite, genuine, humble, and touching—that his own words provide a path of wanderlust through birds and words. To wit: “I remember how sad I was when the swifts left my Parisian eyrie, how much I missed their screeching when, in the evening, I’d return home and sit at the window watching *bateaux-mouches* chugging mournfully past, looking out over the cascading grey roofs towards Montmartre. Those swifts were the only birds in Paris, or so it seemed to me, and the sky was empty without them.”

Or this, about the nightjar (our nighthawk, crepuscular circler of lit steeples): “The nightjar has ever since seemed to me to live a half-life caught between our world and a chthonic netherworld, where he churs amid the shades and shadows.” His descriptions are the best sort: those that make you say *of course* that’s what it’s like! Referring to the dinosaurian look of herons, he writes that “the heron is atavistic, stately even...no other bird makes sixty-five million years seem so short.”

And he is surely right when he says that “There is something unsettling about these great, still birds. We sense in them a deep sorrow as they stand for hours, caught in brown studies over grey water.” When I fly fish at the Rotary Arboretum on the south side of town, a heron inevitably shows up to keep me company, perched with remarkable stillness, casting me sidelong glances, keeping an eye out for minnows, and Preston is precisely correct about their appearance.

The book is wide-ranging in its critical eye, incorporating not just Hopkins but John Clare, Richard Mabey, Edward Grey, William Wordsworth, Robert Macfarlane, Mary Oliver, W.S. Merwin, D.H. Lawrence, and plenty of others. But it’s Preston himself, even amid this august company, who repeatedly shines. Taking a swim in a Sussex river, he is suddenly not alone: “There was a perturbation of the mist, a brief hiss, and then I saw her, the barn owl looming low along the water towards me... She caught sight of me at the last moment and sheared up into a willow, where I saw her, watching me, goblin-eyes green and luminous in the dusk.”

The very best bird writing—actually, let’s make that the very best *writing*, full stop—is that which, even momentarily, breaks down the barrier between us and the eternal, between the human and the ethereal. It provokes us to glimpse the other side, however briefly, allowing us to climb in spirit with the skylark, the curlew, the goldfinch. Preston’s book does this beautifully. I strongly encourage you to buy it, read it, and treasure it.
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 per year. (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 and mail to: AOK 210 Southwind Rd. Manhattan, KS 66503; Please do not send your check to JAS. or use this online link - http://www.audubonofkansas.org/joindonate/.

Please send this completed form & your check to JAS c/o Membership Chair: 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