

➤ JAS Events Cancelled/Postponed ◀



Following advisories from the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Dept. and the National Audubon Society, JAS postponed our March 23rd meeting and the 50th Anniversary Celebration & Dinner on April 27th .

The March 23rd program by Jim Bresnahan on Wildlife of Peru will be rescheduled in the fall. A new date for the 50th Anniversary Celebration and Dinner is to be determined. The whole year is our 50th so there is plenty of time.



The First Friday Bird Walk scheduled for April 3rd is also cancelled. You may think that is overkill since it is an outdoor event, but inevitably people on field trips end up standing quite close to each other trying to see a bird or help another person to see it or sharing a picture in a field guide or on a phone. That's reality. Douglas County has been under a stay-at-home order except for essential errands since 3/24. Outdoor exercise is still allowed. With spring migration underway and turkey vultures, phoebes, shore birds and other migrants being seen around Kansas, it's a perfect time to go birding, just not in a group.

Need some ideas for a good/new place to bird? Visit <https://www.jayhawkaudubon.org/birding-sites> for our list of local places to birdwatch. You'll find which species you can expect to see, the type of habitat, and best time to go as well as maps & directions. Choosing which site to visit might get non-birder family members interested in an outing.

Please take care of yourselves, because we look forward to sharing many programs and celebrations and, most of all, watching lots and lots of birds together!

The Jayhawk Audubon Board

Something Wonderful that Coronavirus Can't Cancel ~ Return of the Ruby-throats and Orioles!

Our beloved, fascinating Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are well into this spring's migratory journey with many sightings reported from southern states and even as far north as Washington, D.C. on the Eastern seaboard. Track them with Journey North: <https://maps.journeynorth.org/map/?map=hummingbird-ruby-throated-first&year=2020> (Great for kids!)

Males leave wintering grounds first arriving here early to mid-April. Clean feeders now and, in a week or two, hang them up because the birds are known to arrive and zoom straight to the exact spot a feeder was hung the year before. Remembering the location of a food source is a crucial energy saver for a hummingbird needing to stoke its fast burning metabolism.

Orioles will be back soon too, so have the jelly, orange, or oriole nectar feeder ready to attract them. For two glorious weeks last spring, we had 8 male and 2 female Baltimore Orioles scarfing jelly in the yard and flashing mesmerizing color and action which would be so welcome in this nerve-racking time. ~ Susan Iversen



Female Ruby-throat
at native honeysuckle

Jennifer Dropkin Leaves Board, Continues as FB Administrator

Long-serving board member Jennifer Dropkin has stepped down from the Jayhawk Audubon board. She has been an invaluable source of ideas and wise counsel. Many thanks to Jennifer for volunteering her time and expertise to JAS over the years.

Jennifer is also the creative wellspring of the JAS Facebook page. She has been the savvy board member educating us about the importance of the chapter having a social media presence beyond our webpage. She created the FB page and has been the administrator ever since, with Chuck Herman, past JAS president, as co-administrator for the first several years.

Our page now has 756 followers and 693 likes! Both numbers are considerably larger than our enrolled membership showing that Jennifer's work has materially expanded Jayhawk Audubon's reach. Fortunately, Jennifer has volunteered to carry on administering our FB page for awhile continuing the flow of her fun & interesting posts and timely event updates. If you have never visited the page, check it out right now to see what Jennifer has posted about the farting thrush (no kidding...) and Splendid Fairy-wren both of Australia. <https://www.facebook.com/Jayhawk-Audubon-Society-309527825743050/>

The board is very grateful to Jennifer for all her work for JAS. Thank you Jennifer!! The board will miss you.

Baldwin Woods Outing

Assuming our shelter at home order has eased by then, Roger Boyd is planning to lead a bird outing to Baldwin Woods on Saturday, April 25th starting at 8:00 a.m. He will meet attendees at the east end of Rice Woods—N 500 Road and East 1750 Road. Nearby Douglas County State Fishing lake may also be on the itinerary. The trip will be over by midmorning.

The Baldwin Woods is home to a rich diversity of plants and animals and usually a great place to see warblers during spring migration. It is the extreme western edge of the eastern deciduous forest biome, so a rare habitat in Kansas, and has been designated a National Natural Landmark and a Legacy Forest.

Please contact Roger with any questions and to confirm that the field trip is still on:

785-424-0595 or rboyd@bakeru.edu

Statewide Birding Events Cancelled

The Kansas Ornithological Society announced this week that it's May Spring Meeting has been cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Kansas Birding Festival, held every other year at Milford Lake at the end of April, was actually cancelled earlier because of "long term extreme flooding and damage at the lake." The Wings and Wetlands Festival at Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira NWR is held in the alternate years so is currently set for April, 2021.



**Banded Male
Golden-winged
Warbler**

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Audubon of Kansas Chapter Rep: Ron Wolf

Spring = Migration = ★Ta-da★ Birdathon

Warblers and other migratory birds will be here in full force in another month bringing welcome color and song to our woods and grasslands. May brings International Migratory Bird Day on the 9th and the JAS Birdathon, our main fundraiser along with seed sales.

Birdathon has always been based on member birders securing pledges of support, often 25 or 30 cents for each species seen, and then going into the field seeking to count as many species of birds as can be found within a twenty-four hour span. The coronavirus pandemic has made that strategy uncertain. Field trips can be postponed, but timing of the peak of migration is a natural phenomenon unaffected by our human concerns.

Thus at this time, we can't say whether or not there will be Birdathon field trips. If things are looking up—as *birdwatchers love to do*, “*eyes to the sky*,” you know—for early May field trips we'll notify you via all our outlets: Facebook, listserv, newsletter and website. Meanwhile, we ask for a Birdathon pledge or donation for the conservation work of the chapter. For fourteen years the Learning About Nature field trips for 6th graders led by Sandy Sanders, Education Chair, have been a splendid success. These are currently on hiatus with the school closures, but we expect them back next fall. Eagles Day is a wonderful, community-wide impact event we sponsor and coordinate with partners. We provide it free to all comers.

The Plants for Birds initiative is another very active program. Jennifer Delisle and Lynn Byczynski have held many events to educate people on the importance of planting native plants to support insects and birds. We've given away hundreds(!) of natives, and Jennifer spearheaded last June's Prairie Block Party at Burroughs Creek Park which emphasized the benefits of native plants.

JAS needs your support in any amount for these programs. Thank you!



Black-and-white Warblers. WhatBird.com

Keep the Good Work Coming!

Here's My Contribution to Help

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

I want to volunteer with JAS for:

<input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Birdathon
<input type="checkbox"/> Eagles Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Earth Day
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Be an Officer

Clip this form and send it along with your check to: Jayhawk Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3741 Lawrence, KS 66046

You can donate via Paypal or card. Visit:
<https://www.jayhawkaudubon.org/donate>

Thank You!

Hidden Valley Trails & Prairie Appreciation Day

Saturday, June 6 9am ~ 1 pm
Hidden Valley 3420 Bob Billings Pkwy

Come along and explore the natural wonders of the camp's 40 acres of hidden wilderness. Hike on your own, go on a scavenger hunt, or join one of the guided tours, ranging from bird watching to wildflower walks and natural history. There will be exhibits and activities about prairies, wetlands, pollinator plants, biochar and scouting.

The event is co-sponsored by Hidden Valley Camp and Jayhawk Audubon. More details later on the JAS and Hidden Valley Facebook pages and websites: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsoflawrencehiddenvalley> and <https://www.friendshv.org/>



Wilson's Snipe. They winter in Kansas and points south and breed in the northern tier of states and Canada. Mass Audubon

Native Plant Sales

Sat., May 16: 9 am—1 pm. Grassland Heritage Native Plant Sale. Trinity Episcopal Church, 1011 Vermont, Lawrence. Check <https://www.facebook.com/events/2507743779487040/> for updates closer to 5/16.

Sat., May 30: 9 am—3 pm. Visions for Sustainable Gardening & Garden Show 2020. Douglas Cty Master Gardeners. Free! Building 21, DG Cty Fairgrounds, 2110 Harper, Lawrence

Postponed! The Monarch Watch Spring Plant Sale/Open House has been postponed until further notice. However, thousands of plants will need a home and MW is seeking a way to allow local order and pick up. They will also reschedule the event later if possible and will post information when available. Check the website: <https://monarchwatch.org/openhouse/>

Shorebird Conservation News

The Flint Hills Shorebird Conservation Initiative and the Kansas Shorebird Telemetry Project launched in 2020. The Flint Hills Initiative aims to conserve the region's prairies, grazing culture and wildlife (especially shorebirds) by increasing public and local stakeholder support in three ways:

- Improving knowledge about shorebird numbers, seasonality, and habitat use to inform conservation and management strategies.
- Improving shorebird habitat management in the Flint Hills Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) landscape.
- Supporting programs providing economic sustainability to land managers/owners committed to managing lands for shorebirds and other wildlife.

The Shorebird Telemetry Project will collect data on shorebirds' length of stay at Cheyenne Bottoms. Length of stay is critical information for interpreting counts at migration stopover sites, especially key stopovers such as the Bottoms.

This data will help scientists understand connections between stopovers used by migrating shorebirds. Because shorebirds rely on a restricted network of stopover and staging sites, perhaps more so than any other birds, understanding connections between sites is of critical management importance. Updated site-specific information will aid in the development of international conservation plans and initiatives.

The data from Cheyenne Bottoms will support the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network—one of the largest migratory bird conservation and research initiatives in the world— and provide Kansans opportunities to participate in research and monitoring projects including with local universities. Public outreach and education through the Kansas Wetlands Education Center will also be enriched as a result of this project.

Robert L. Penner II Ph.D.

The Nature Conservancy Cheyenne Bottoms
& Avian Programs Manager

Chair, WHSRN-USA Committee
WHSRN Hemispheric Council
U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership Council

From National Audubon: When Is a Bird a Birb?

By Asher Elbein

Certain terms embed themselves in your consciousness like a woodpecker's beak in particle board. "Birb" is one of them. It's affectionate internet-speak for birds, beginning, as near as anyone can tell, when the absurdist BirdsRightsActivist tweeted out the single word "Birb" in 2012. In two years, it had multiple entries in Urban Dictionary and a dedicated reddit forum. What a good birb, you might say, or I'm so glad we went birb-watching, or I love Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birbs*.

Birb is a daffy word from the school of internet absurdity that gave us LOLCats ("I Can Haz Cheez-burger"). Yet unlike these memes, birb functions as a category rather than a stock character. It is akin to "doggo," or "snek," yet all dogs and snakes are contained in those words; birb remains amorphous. Sit outside an Austin coffeeshop on a pleasant fall day perusing urban birds: strutting, sardonic grackles, chatty parakeets, bustling sparrows. Which are birbs? What is a birb, really? Rules are needed.

Rule 1: Birbs are often small

Adult Ostriches are thus disqualified, as is any bird larger than a turkey. Even large birds start small, however: an ostrich chick is absolutely a birb. While "birb" can be a developmental stage, some birds are birbs their whole lives.

Rule 2: Birbs are often round

We tend to regard round animals as cuter. Given this, the rounder or fluffier a bird is, the more birb-like it is likely to be. Classic songbirds & rotund groundbirds like grouse and ptarmigans have the advantage: they are little balls of fluff, an important component for birbness. Most hawks and eagles are too sharp and angular to qualify under this metric; the same goes for gulls, cranes, crows, and grackles. If the Pileated Woodpecker didn't lose its birb status under Rule 1, it does now, though smaller and rounder woodpeckers like the Downy or Red-bellied are most certainly birbs

Rule 3: Birbs appear cute

This gets into dicier territory: isn't cuteness subjective? Up to a point, but Rule 2 helps here. Humans like looking at round and fluffy things. So much so, in fact, that violent or unseemly behavior doesn't disqualify a bird from birbness: the aggression of hummingbirds, the Vlad-the-Impaler antics of shrikes, brood parasitism of cuckoos, and brain-eating of Great Tits are immaterial to their round fluffiness. You could post a picture of any of these on reddit under "murder birb" and nobody would blink.

Again, eagles and other large raptors are too majestic and fierce looking to meet this metric. However, silliness or absurdity also come into play: potoos are large and not particularly fluffy, but their general muppet appearance makes them a contender for birbness. Even the terrifying Shoebill stork sneaks in with this exemption.

Common Potoo.

Muppetty? Oh yeah.

P. Dubois



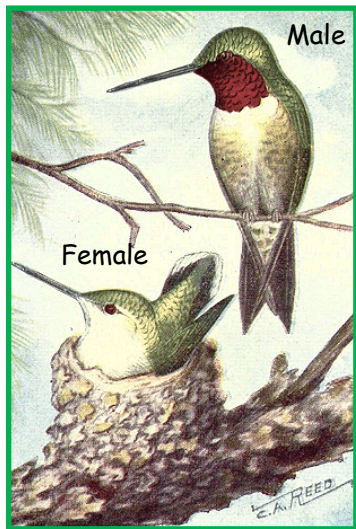
Now that we've laid out some basic guidelines, let's test them out. The following are unquestionably birbs, hitting the natural sweet spot of round, fluffy, and small: the vast majority of songbirds. Burrowing Owls, Elf Owls, both screech-owls, American Kestrels and other small raptors also qualify. So do prairie-chickens, quail, sandpipers, and smaller seabirds like puffins and penguins. Parrots of all sizes are in, despite some of them being quite formidable, because culturally they scan as cute.

Little waders like the Green Heron are in, but the Great Blue Heron? Sorry, not a birb. Swans and geese have solidified a reputation as terrors, and are worryingly big besides. Most cranes, herons, and storks are too large and lanky. And then you get to birds like the Cassowary, which is perhaps the least birb-like bird on the planet. Its chicks may qualify as birbs (see Rule 1), but adults most definitely do not.

Now, one might reasonably ask why it matters which birds qualify as birbs. Strictly speaking, of course, it doesn't. But viewed sidelong, it becomes a taxonomic game, akin to "is a hot dog a sandwich." It's a chance to take stock, not just of what we think about birds, but *how* we think about them. Defining "birb" also means interrogating our impressions. It's not only about rating them: It's about reminding us that—regardless of birb-status—all birds are good.

★Eds. Note: Visit the NAS website to see the funny comments—even poems—submitted on this article: <https://www.audubon.org/news/when-bird-birb-extremely-important-guide>

The article has been abridged to fit this page.



Hummingbirds are back in Kansas! They flew a long way to get here.

There are over 320 species of hummingbirds,
but only Ruby-throated Hummingbirds raise babies in Kansas!

There are no hummingbirds in Europe, Africa or Asia.
Hummingbirds only live in North & South America.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (RTHU's) spend the winter way down south in Mexico & Central America. It's cold and snowy up here, but there it is warm. There are flowers with nectar and insects for the birds to eat. But in spring, RTHUs fly back north to build nests and raise their babies. Look up maps of Mexico & Central America.



In early spring, RTHU's stuff themselves for a few weeks to fatten up and store lots of energy for their muscles to use.

Then they go to the northern edge of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico: Map ➡



They wait for clear weather and wind at their back to help them go faster. Then they start off flying over the waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

They can't stop flying until they reach the other side

because they will drown if they land on the water.



This journey of 500 miles takes them 24 hours - a whole day and night!

NO SLEEP! TINY RTHUS ARE TOUGH!!!



Why do Ruby-throats make this dangerous journey?

Down south lots of other hummingbirds are after the same food and nesting spots. Up here there are not as many hummingbirds to compete with. It's worth the long, hard trip to have more food to feed their babies.



THINGS TO DO:

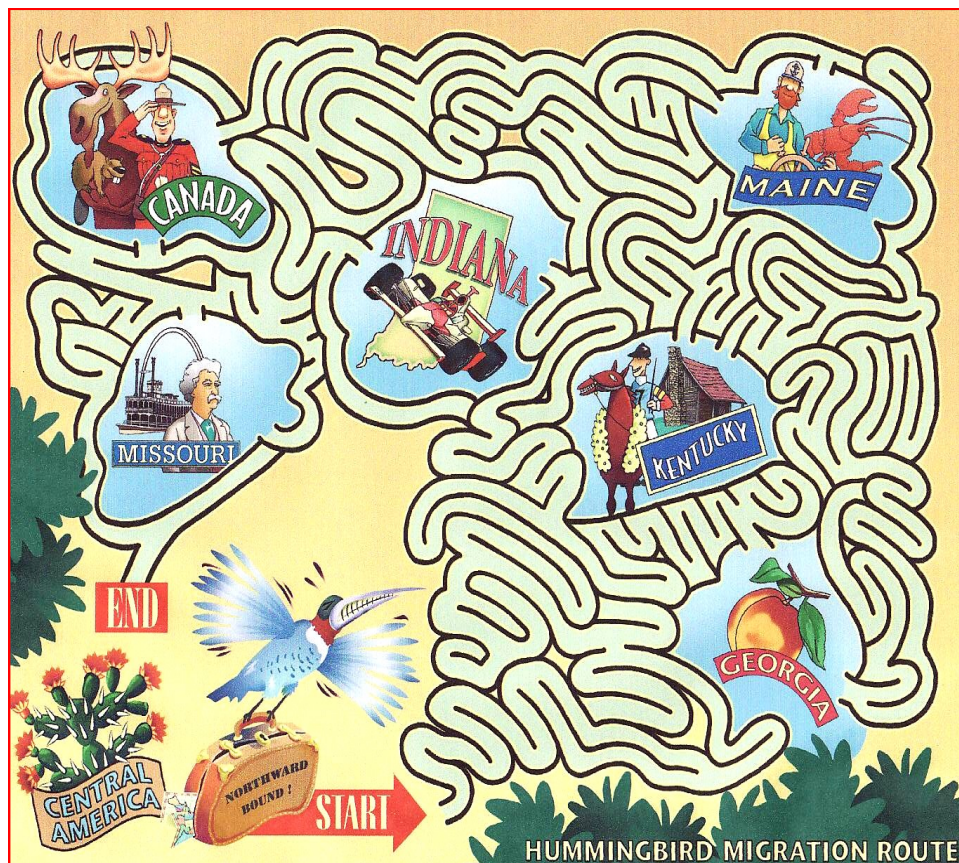
1. Hold a penny in your hand. That is how much Ruby-throats weigh! **THEY WEIGH THE SAME AS A PENNY- 2.5 grams!!**
2. Put up a hummingbird feeder.
3. Can you tell how many different birds are visiting the feeder.
4. Are you seeing any fights or other territorial behavior?
5. Visit the Journey North website for slideshows, migration tracking maps and more: <https://journeynorth.org/hummingbirds>
6. Try to feed a hummer from your hand...What?...Yes, it can be done: <http://www.birdsandblooms.com/Birds/Hummingbirds/feed-hummingbirds-by-hand>. Watch the video. It takes a lot of patience to hand feed a bird

6. AT THE LIBRARY:

On The Wing, American Birds in Migration. By Carol Lerner.

How Do Birds Find Their Way? By Roma Gans.

Flute's Journey, The Life of a Wood Thrush. By Lynne Cherry



The Armchair Birder: Discovering the Secret Lives of Familiar Birds

The Armchair Birder Goes Coastal: The Secret Lives of Birds of the Southeastern Shore

By John Yow

Reviewed by McKay Stangler

I am not a birder. There, I said it. Frankly, I don't even care for the verb "birding." What was wrong with "birdwatching," with its casual cadence and overtones of sunny mornings on porches? When one *watches*, there is a passivity, a willingness to let the great winged world wash over you. When one goes *birding*, there is an effort to it, a pursuit—an attempt to wrestle the unknowable to the ground and catalogue it with checkoffs and "life lists" and bizarre rivalries. It's exhausting.

What a relief, then, to find the works of John Yow. A Georgian and a devoted *watcher*, Yow is the author of *The Armchair Birder* and its sequel, *The Armchair Birder Goes Coastal*. Yow embraces his titular furniture: he sits and watches birds in his yard in the first book, and then in the latter volume he travels the southeast coast to see the birds he'll never encounter in suburban Atlanta.

The books are a delight. That word used to be fairly common to describe experiences before we succumbed as a culture to the tyranny of "awesome" and "epic." When something delights you, it greets you where you are, puts a smile on your face, and hands you an Arnold Palmer in the sunshine. That is the experience of these books.

In the first, Yow is wonderfully disarming: "The designation 'armchair birder' signals no achievement and confers no distinction," he writes, noting of his life list that "you could just about get the whole thing on a cocktail napkin." Instead his passion is to "hang feeders and watch the birds that come to me. I listen to their songs and sometimes succeed in figuring out which bird is singing which tune."

My complaint about "birding" is the same complaint I make about, say, Sierra Club wall calendars. By prioritizing—dare we say fetishizing?—the exotic and rare, we overlook the nature that is right in front of us. Just as an empty Lenexa field never graced a Sierra calendar, so too does the humble starling never appear in an Audubon Society calendar, where it might dare to dislodge the indigo bunting. Hey, I like buntings too—but which bird is the average person more likely to see today?

This is an old, Thoreauvian complaint: by emphasizing the *out there*, we overlook the *right here*. I for one adore starlings, with their noisy complaints, sharp triangular wings, and reliable clustering along Iowa Street. Sure, I want my fellow Lawrencians to see an occasional bunting, but if I want them to care about birds and their conservation, shouldn't I pay some mind to the starling?

Yow goes species by species, noting behavior, the seed that attracts each bird, a brief history of each, and lovely anecdotes about his experience with the bird. (Did you know a single roosting flock of 10,000 chimney swifts was observed in our fair state?) Yow's swifts form a multi-family colony with his neighbor's swifts, perhaps to simply spend the summer together before the trip south.

The second book finds Yow on the road in the Carolinas, coastal Georgia, and especially the Florida Gulf Coast—perhaps the nation's greatest spot for birdwatchers. Yow is a reluctant but enthusiastic traveler, with delightful asides on his journey: "When it comes to two-story beach motels, is age a good thing? More specifically, should the Sea Foam motel in Nag's Head, North Carolina, offer up as a selling point that it's on the National Register of Historic Places?"

He is still no expert, though—"So, you see, I've learned something in my months of shorebirding: I've learned how little I know."—and that is emphatically part of his charm. Yow is the role player on the weekend pickup team; he's not LeBron. He is an everyman, not an expert.

Few of us are true experts. Most of us are a different creature: the watcher. As I write this, I look out at my feeder and see a humble sparrow, the usual cardinal, the occasional chickadee. None will cause heart palpitations among "birders," with their Bushnells always trained at the horizon, looking for the Bigger Better Bird. Number me with Yow: the bird watchers, the bird observers, the bird lovers.

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Cerulean Warbler. Definitely a
“birb.” (p 5) By James Bresnahan

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 Kristine Latta, P.O. Box 3741
Lawrence, KS 66046.

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