

# Audubon

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October 2016

**October 8**

*Second Saturday bird walk in Chisholm Creek Park. No birding experience needed. Expect 1-2 miles of walking on paved paths for approximately 90 minutes. Meet in the parking lot at 8 a.m. Questions? Kevin Groeneweg, 706-9116, kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net*

**October 18**

*Monthly program, "The Red Hills and the Anderson Creek Fire," by Ken Brunson, 7 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center. Join us for dinner before the program at Panera Bread, 1605 N Rock Rd, at 5:30 p.m. **Page 1***

**October 22**

*Slate Creek Wetlands field trip. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Slate Valley Baptist Church (7 miles south of the main intersection in Oxford). Leader: Gene Young, youngg6264@yahoo.com, 620-660-0547.*

**Page 2****October 22**

*Planets, Constellations and Satellites at Chaplin Nature Center, 7:30 - 9 p.m.*

**Page 4****November 5**

*Cranes and Geese at Quivira NWR field trip. Meet at the Quivira headquarters at 3 p.m. Leader: Patty Marlett, pmarlett@mac.com, 942-2164*

**Page 2****November 6**

*Inuksuit - a performance by the Southwestern College Percussion Ensemble at Chaplin Nature Center, 2 p.m.*

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## October Meeting

Our October program will feature Ken Brunson. He will talk about the Anderson Creek Fire: it's impacts on the land, the people and the wildlife. Starting on March 22 in Oklahoma, this largest wildfire to occur in Kansas in recorded history consumed nearly 400,000 acres of Oklahoma and Kansas. While ranchers are still busily trying to replace fences and some landowners lost their residences and buildings as well as several hundred head of cattle, the recovery has been remarkable. Ken Brunson retired from the state wildlife agency after 38 years of service in 2011. Ken held positions ranging from work with stream research and pollution investigations to that of the state's Nongame Program Coordinator. Upon retirement, Ken accepted the



position of Red Hills Project Coordinator for The Nature Conservancy in Kansas. In this current job, Ken has been able to work with ranchers and other partners to improve rangeland health through programs of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. As a partner employee with NRCS in the Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative, Ken focuses on conservation efforts to improve its status. Red Hills conservation targets for TNC additionally include grassland birds, caves and sensitive bat species, streams, and mixed-grass prairie. The meeting will be held on October 18, 7 p.m. at the Great Plains Nature Center. You can also join us for dinner with Ken before the program at Panera Bread, 1605 N. Rock Rd, at 5:30 p.m.

# Thank you

Thanks to Tom Ewert, Kevin Groeneweg, Bev DuGay and Susan Hammer for representing us at Exploration Place on August 27. The Big Splash event celebrated the grand opening of their new permanent Aquifer exhibit. The purpose of the exhibit is to give a deeper understanding of the serious water situation in Kansas, how natural and man made water systems work, how our behaviors impact the collective water supply and all the life that depend on it, ways that we can change our behaviors to improve the outlook of our water supply, and technologies that are being developed and used to reduce water consumption.



## Bird Seed Sale

Our first bird seed sale of the season will be on October 8. Have your order in by October 1 and we will deliver to you on the 8th (within Wichita city limits.)

- 25 lb bag of Black Oil Sunflower \$18
- 20 lb bag of Wildbird Delight Mix \$13
- 25 lb bag of Safflower Seed \$22

Call Carol Cumberland at 685-4867 or email [carol.cumberland@swbell.net](mailto:carol.cumberland@swbell.net). All proceeds benefit Chaplin Nature Center and WAS programs & events.

### 2016-2017 WAS Officers

President	Gregg Friesen		<a href="mailto:friesen_fenton@yahoo.com">friesen_fenton@yahoo.com</a>
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Send address changes to Tom Ewert, 1021 N. Lakewind, Wichita, KS 67212, [trewert@yahoo.com](mailto:trewert@yahoo.com)

## Field Trips

Join us Saturday, October 22, for a field trip to Slate Creek Wetlands led by Gene Young. Fall is a good time for migrants, especially sparrows. LeConte's and Nelson's Sparrows are good possibilities. It might be muddy, so be prepared, and expect to do some hiking. Bring a lunch. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Slate Valley Baptist Church, 7 miles south of Oxford. Leader: Gene Young, 620-660-0547, [youngg6264@yahoo.com](mailto:youngg6264@yahoo.com)

On Saturday, November 5, we will make our annual pilgrimage to Quivira National Wildlife Refuge for the spectacle of thousands of geese (mostly Snow Geese) and Sandhill Cranes coming in to roost at the Big Salt Marsh. If we are really lucky there might be a Whooping Crane, too. We will meet at 3 p.m. at the Quivira Headquarters building, then make a leisurely drive through the refuge, looking for shorebirds and waterfowl. Then we will watch the birds arriving at sunset. Dress for the weather - some years it is warm, sometimes cold.

Leader: Patty Marlett, 942-2164, [pmarlett@mac.com](mailto:pmarlett@mac.com)

Our extended field trip this year will be to Magee Marsh in Ohio, the week of May 15. Planning is still underway, and some details depend on input from the attendees. So if you are at all interested, please contact Kevin Groeneweg, 706-9116, [kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kgroeneweg@sbcglobal.net), so he can factor you in.

# Flint Hills Receive Rare Designation for Shorebird Habitat

The Nature Conservancy is pleased to announce the Flint Hills of Kansas and Oklahoma have received a rare designation from the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), recognizing the tallgrass prairie's international importance as a stopover point for migrating shorebirds.

The WHSRN Hemispheric Council voted unanimously to approve the nomination of the 3.7 million-acre Flint Hills as a WHSRN Landscape of Hemispheric Importance.

The Council created the "Landscape" category to accommodate vast areas, or a complex of areas, of importance to shorebirds where designating any one "site" therein is not feasible. Such areas often comprise a multitude of landowners that are represented by one or more partner organizations submitting the WHSRN nomination. The Flint Hills is the second such WHSRN landscape designation; the first was the 3.9-million-acre Rainwater Basin in Nebraska in 2009.

As the lead partner in submitting the nomination, The Nature Conservancy of Kansas will actively encourage private landowners to consider shorebirds and their habitats in land management activities within the newly designated WHSRN Landscape. This stewardship commitment is central to being part of the Network, in addition to meeting biological criteria.

The Flint Hills comprise many privately owned lands engaged in land conservation and restoration activities, including various programs administered by federal, state, and nongovernmental partners who support the WHSRN designation.

"The Flint Hills are among our highest conservation priorities in Kansas and in North America. This historic designation rightly recognizes the ecological importance of the area, and it will accelerate our partnership efforts to conserve the ecological and economic richness of the tallgrass prairie" said Rob Manes, The Nature Conservancy's Kansas Director. "The future of some American shorebird populations rests on our ability to safeguard places like the Flint Hills."

In 2011, the Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began the effort of quantifying the shorebirds moving through the Flint Hills each spring. Surveying

such a vast area required the use of a distance sampling method. Cheyenne Bottoms and Kansas Avian Programs Manager Dr. Robert Penner II developed eighty-eight 10 square mile grids with driving routes. Surveyors drove along the routes and, when shorebirds were sighted, they recorded the distance to the center of the flock and the vegetation conditions of the land used by the birds. The physical size of the flock allowed surveyors to estimate the number of birds. It was soon clear that shorebirds favored recently-burned areas which also made spotting them easier, but surveyors still had to have a bit of luck on their side. In the first year, even with limited surveyors, over 20,000 American Golden Plovers were spotted.

By 2015, with several more volunteers surveying, that number rose to over 78,000. The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is considered "highly imperiled" in the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and it was this bird that clinched the designation for the Flint Hills. Over 32,000 Buff-breasted Sandpipers more than 30 percent of the entire North American population, was documented as using the Flint Hills as a stopover point.

"Tallgrass prairie is the most altered ecosystem in North America. The Flint Hills landscape presents a unique opportunity to preserve the continent's last expression of an ecologically intact, functioning tallgrass prairie. We know, from years of shorebird surveys, that migrants, such as Buff-breasted Sandpiper, American Golden-Plover, Upland Sandpiper, and Killdeer, are using this north-south corridor extensively," explains Dr. Penner. For the past 15 years, The Nature Conservancy and its partner organizations and landowners have been steadily advancing the goals of its Flint Hills Initiative, a long-term conservation project designed to restore and protect the region's biological integrity, in tandem with benefits to the local economy, culture and region. Other partners committed to this project, and to shorebird conservation on this new WHSRN Landscape, include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism; Kansas Land Trust; Ranchland Trust of Kansas; and the Tallgrass Legacy Alliance.



## Chaplin Nature Center Programs

### *Saturday, October 22, 7:30 - 9 p.m. Planets, Constellations and Satellites*

Join the Kansas Astronomical Observers at the Chaplin Nature Center for a night under the stars. Learn about the planets, constellations and other heavenly bodies. Participants are welcome to bring their own telescopes to join the fun. Admission is free.

### *Sunday, November 6, 2 p.m. Inuiksuit*

Composed by John Luther Adams, this performance consists of percussion sounds and was meant to be played in a natural setting. “Inuiksuit” is the word for stone markers that guide the Inuit people on journeys across the Arctic tundra. It also means “to act in the capacity of the human.” This is different than a traditional concert as musicians are dispersed over a large area. It pushes the concept of “traditional music” — sounds are given their natural time to assert themselves before they are overlapped with others that naturally grow from the earlier ones’ timbres and envelopes. The piece will be performed by the Southwestern College Percussion Ensemble. You can listen to You can listen to the composer’s interpretation of the piece at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAk527M-INA>



For more information about any Chaplin Nature Center programs call Shawn Silliman at 620-442-4133, or e-mail [cnc@wichitaudubon.org](mailto:cnc@wichitaudubon.org).

CNC is located 3 miles west of Arkansas City on Hwy 166, north 2 miles on 21st Rd, east 0.6 miles on 272nd Rd.