NEWSLETTER FROM SUNFLOWER AUDUBON

October, 2026

CONTACT

sunfloweraudubon@gail.com

Sunflower Audubon on Facebook

sunfloweraudubon.org

GET TO KNOW:

The Sandhill Crane



The Sandhill Crane, *Antigone canadensis*, is perhaps best known for its song which can be heard up to a mile away from the flock as they fly overhead in their typical V shape or by

PRAIRIE GARDEN FESTIVAL

October 10 from 11:30-2:30, our chapter will join with like-minded people/organizations from around the area to hold the first annual Prairie Garden Festival. The event is meant to introduce people to ways they can promote native species in their own landscapes, no matter how small, even with a pot or two. How to protect species like insects and birds. In conjunction with the K-State Extension office, it is our hope that this fun event will inform as well as entertain. Pass it along. it around.

BIRDS AND BREWS

October 15, the chapter will host another trivia contest. To be held in the back room at the Golden Q starting at 5:30, come for a fun time. We only request that you buy at least one beverage. Teams of 1 or 2 may participate. This is a friendly competition. No expert knowledge is needed! We'll have at least 20 rounds or more depending upon attendance. Anyone is welcome. A time to become better acquainted and maybe even learn something cool about birds.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Every year between December 14 and January 5, citizen scientists from around the world band together to count the birds they see to give Audubon scientists data about bird populations. The nation's longest running community science bird project, Audubon partners with Birds Canada. This year marks the 127th count. Hays/Ellis County's official event will be on **December 19th, 2026, starting at 7:30am. Meet in Albertson Hall, Room 169 on the FHSU campus**. The event kicks off with an overview of the territory and participants are given a specific sector to canvas and record their findings. Many that have participated in past counts have an area they prefer and are given priority. Even if you have little bird ID experience, you are welcome and may be paired with a more experienced birder for the morning/day. There will also be a beginner friendly bird walk around the FHSU campus from 11am-12pm, meeting in front of Albertson Hall. If a person chooses, they may also do a count of the birds visiting their bird

the huge flocks of birds when migrating. If you are lucky enough to visit a roosting site either along the North Platte River in Nebraska or nearer to Hays, Quivera National Wildlife Refuge, one can witness flocks of hundreds to thousands lifting off to continue their trip to either nesting or wintering grounds. They may also be seen feeding in large numbers in nearby fields where their haunting song can still heard.

The birds draw attention whether singly stepping across a wet meadow or filling the skies. These tall, gray bodied birds with their crimson caps have a certain elegance about them.

They are known also for their dancing skills when courting, leaping in the air in a graceful, elegant dance. The crane pairs mate for life. Mated pairs and their juvenile offspring stay together until the following spring.

The earliest Sandhill Crane fossil is estimated to be 2.5 million years old. The longest-lived crane on record was at least 37 years old. The young can leave the nest within 8 hours of hatching from a nest located in small, isolated wetlands made of cattails, sedges, burr reeds or grasses.

Information courtesy of:

All About Birds

THINK ABOUT PLASTIC.

How can you make an impact?

Pledge to reduce plastic for even one day. Think about how you can replace something with a recyclable. From a reuseable shopping bag to not using a straw when dining out. You can make a difference!

feeders. Each person or team is given a tally sheet and at the end of the day will turn this in to Diana Pantle, the coordinator for this year's count. She will tabulate the results and turn them into National. For more information about this and prior counts, please visit Audubon Christmas Bird Count | Audubon

COMMUNITY AWARENESS!



MOTUS TOWERS

The National Audubon Society and its various chapters join Global Wildlife in a large network designed to help birds. For those who aren't aware, across the country, chapters are involved in helping track radio-tagged birds, connecting the dots of bird migration across the hemisphere and inform conservation and research efforts. The towers, called Motus towers are part of a global wildlife tracking research effort. For a complete rundown of this valuable tool, please click here: Audubon, Chapters Join Global Wildlife Tracking Network to Help Birds | Audubon North Carolina

CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY SCIENCE!

Did you know that your observations could contribute to the conservation of a species? Documenting what you see while birding can help scientists document the distributions of wild creatures throughout the state:

One way to keep track is using ***eBird***. A popular app managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Observers can log the birds they see while the app keeps track of the date, location and time spent observing. Even

recording visits at your bird feeder may have an impact!

Another app used by many, *iNaturalist*, is for everything that isn't a bird. This app allows a person to upload photos or sound recordings. Volunteer experts subsequently confirm the identity of your observation (or politely suggest an alternative)

2nd ANNUAL HAYS KANSAS SCIENCE FEST

Our Chapter once again participated in the above. On Sunday May 2rd, 2026 Diana and Emily talked about the bird flight. From how high they can fly to how they fly. Kids were asked to estimate how high they believe various types of birds can fly and all were amazed that the champion is the Russell's Griffin Vulture that was documented at 37,000 feet! Unfortunately, for the bird, the bird was sucked into a jet engine (no reports of damage to the airplane). Emily demonstrated why birds can fly and we can't Despite flapping her arms for over 3 hours, she never accomplished getting even a few inches off the floor.

5th ANNUAL ROCKS AND ROCKETS OUTREACH

Held in Colby, KS, this event featured a variety of topics from space exploration to geology. Our chapter was invited to present the information we did at the Hays Science Fest. Again, people were shocked by how high birds, even normally, can fly. Leslie demonstrated the anatomy of a bird and how that enables flight. These 2 events have allowed our chapter to become known throughout the area as a resource to learn about birds. It is our hope to participate in more such events as time goes by.

We hope to see you at an upcoming event. Reminder all are open to anyone, you do not have to be a member!