



SMOKY HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2936 Salina, Kansas 67402-2936

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Think globally...act locally!

February—March—April 2023



February 16th SHAS welcomes Henry Diehl—Storm Spotter stories

If storm clouds are brewing in the distance, warnings are blasting on the radio and your phone is angry with severe storm warnings, you will find our February speaker sitting calmly in his truck by the side of the road, staring down danger - eyeball to wall cloud - with absolute calm. Henry Diehl has monitored storms in this area since 1976. That is as long as Smoky Hills Audubon has been having programs. All those years Henry has been providing life saving information to the National Weather Service. Back when storm danger was reported in much less sophisticated ways than we have now, Henry has studied the clouds, scanned the horizons and kept his cool demeanor.

The National weather service in Wichita has recognized Henry for his dedication in relaying vital storm information during hazardous weather events. His knowledge of weather conditions and his ability to read wildfire behavior have made Henry a valuable asset in the Brookville area. Diehl is an area farmer and a longtime first responder as a volunteer fire fighter. KSAL's news director Todd Pittenger believes Diehl's reports on KSAL in 2007 saved many lives when a tornado bore down on the cabin row area of Ottawa State Fishing Lake north of Bennington. Not only did Diehl help to save lives that day, he quickly manned a chain saw to cut fallen trees that blocked the only entrance for first responders to get to the damaged homes. We are fortunate to have Henry Diehl as our speaker on February 16th. Our programs are free and open to the public. This meeting will be in room 225 in Kansas Wesleyan's Peters Science Hall. You may come early and meet the speaker at 7:00 with the program beginning at 7:30.



State of the birds report shows alarming declines

From Audubon National: A newly released *State of the Birds report* for the United States reveals a dire trend. Data show birds in the United States are declining overall in many habitats—forests, grasslands, deserts, and oceans.

Published by 33 leading science and conservation organizations and agencies, the 2022 U.S. State of the Birds report is the first look at the nation's birds since a landmark 2019 study showed the *loss of 3 billion birds* in the United States and Canada in 50 years.

Findings included in the report reveal that more than half of U.S. bird species are declining. U.S. grassland birds are among the fastest declining with a 34% loss since 1970. Waterbirds and ducks in the U.S. have increased by 18% and 34% respectively during the same period.

70 newly identified Tipping Point species have each lost 50% or more of their populations in the past 50 years, and are on a track to lose another half in the next 50 years if nothing changes. They include beloved gems such as Rufous Hummingbirds, songsters such as Golden-winged Warblers, and oceanic travelers such as Black-footed Albatrosses. "What affects birds affects us, and birds are telling us they are in trouble" The report used five sources of data, including the North American Breeding Bird Survey and **Audubon Christmas Bird Count**, to track the health of breeding birds in habitats across the United States. *Read the full report at [StateoftheBirds.org](https://stateofthebirds.org).*

The View from My Perch By Cheryl Higgins



I want to take this opportunity to officially thank all of you for your donations and memberships. Your generous support helps us to continue doing exciting things such as providing great speakers and maintaining the upkeep of the sanctuary property.

Speaking of activities, we had over 160 of you enjoy our unusually warm Halloween party. What a fun event. It's such a large undertaking but so rewarding seeing you there. If you are looking for ways to get involved please consider helping with setup or tear down in 2023.

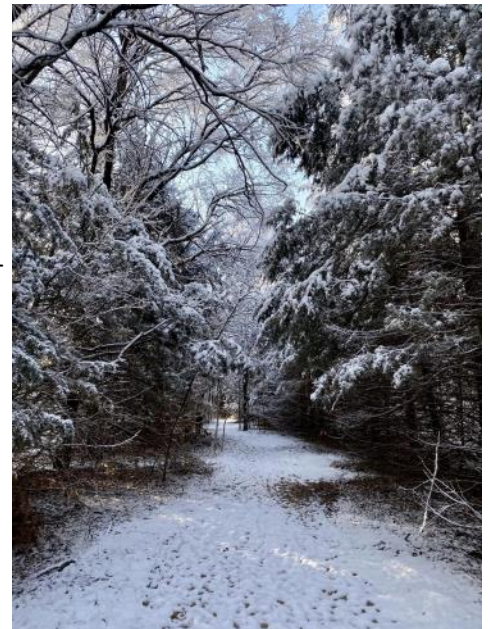
The Christmas Bird Count was a success. Thanks so much to Byron Grauerholz for organizing and compiling all of our data. We had good representation in all four quadrants. My highlights were seeing a pair of Trumpeter Swans on a small farm pond, a King Fisher at Lakewood and a Bald Eagle at the Smoky Hills Audubon Sanctuary. But the best part was spending time with friends while we walk and drive around searching for birds. This definitely isn't my specialty, but it's exciting to learn just a little bit more each time. I'd encourage you to try it out next year. It really helps to be with others to have fun and build your confidence. You never know, you might experience a really special species. We did see the Bald Eagle a couple more times at the sanctuary, but unfortunately it did move on.

Thanks for your commitment to the birds. Our backyard bird Certifications have been going great. We have people on a waiting list. Once it gets a little warmer out we will be out to check on those. If you are interested in making your backyard bird friendly you won't want to miss our speaker from Dyck Arboretum on March 16th They will be giving us some tips to help get our yards ready. (Look for our other fun speakers to come as well)

We loved the snow covered pictures on Facebook by photographer Tanner Colvin, that highlight the sanctuary. It is a beautiful magical place year round. Wasn't that the most beautiful snow fall? Such big fluffy flakes with no wind, that made such a beautiful blanket. The earth is so dry, we could definitely use some more moisture. But it is interesting to see the outline of where the water was around the pond and will be again. It's beautiful in its own unique way.

We will be celebrating Earth Day with a work day at the sanctuary 2700 W Stimmel Rd. on April 22nd at 8:00 am. Bring work gloves, chainsaws, clippers and kneelers. We will be removing cedar saplings around the pond as well as larger trees in the prairie and around the pond we can use the help but we would also enjoy the camaraderie! Somebody has to point out what we miss!

The newest features are a new large Pinn Oak tree donated by Brady Nursery in Wichita. It was planted near an area that was cleared in the South East corner of the pond where a picnic table has been placed. What a great place to be for a sunset! Stay warm and hope to see you soon. If you have any suggestions for events, activities or speakers for the future or want to get involved, please contact me at dcjmhiggins@hotmail.com



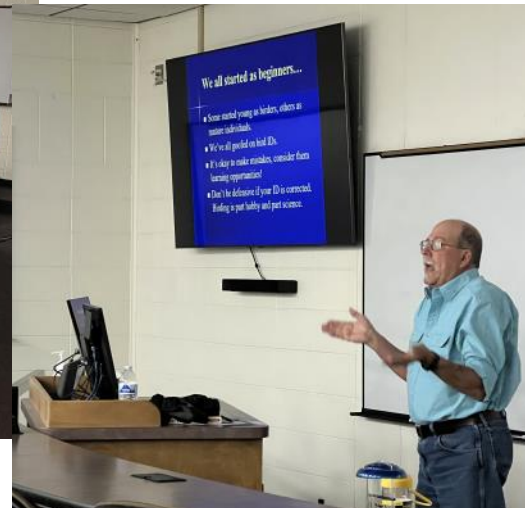
Spring events in 2022



Gordon Fiedler passed out parts of his hive for participants to share around and examine. He explained about all the tools and clothing required for maintain a hive. His personal accounts of both success and failure illustrated the ups and downs of supporting local bee populations.



Gordon Fiedler on Bees



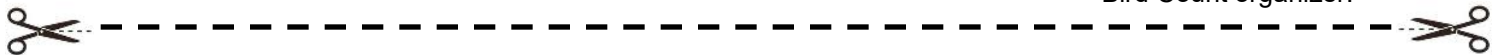
Chuck Otte shared his wisdom on birding



The 2022 Christmas bird count drew in a faithful group of devoted birders that filled the day with a tabulated count of our 15 mile radius circle. The counts are recorded every year and sent to National to add to over a 100 year history.



Byron Grauerholz; Christmas Bird Count organizer.



Yes! I want to support the Smoky Hills Audubon Society
 Yearly Dues for a family are \$20
 and support programs, educational activities and the newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

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Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Interests: Birding Environmental Issues Volunteer assignments Science Legislative Issues

I would like to help with: _____

Please make a check payable to Smoky Hills Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2936, Salina KS 67402-2926
 Suggested Family Membership \$20. Any amount is welcomed.



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Looking for us on the web? We invite you to explore www.smokyhillsaudubon.com If you have suggestions or contributions contact Mark at markneubrand@gmail.com
Look for us on Facebook <https://smokyhillsaudubon.com/>

Activities Calendar

February 16th Henry Diehl will share tips and stories about storm chasing in surrounding counties.

March 16th Representatives of the Dyck Arboretum will share ways to enhance your landscaping to make a more bird friendly environment.

April 20th Earth Day at the Sanctuary—Smoky hills Audubon supporters are invited to spruce up the Sanctuary as our commitment to wildlife enters another year.

May 18th—Speaker and Topic to be announced. Have a suggestion? Contact Cheryl with your idea at dcjmhiggins@hotmail.com

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SMOKY HILLS AUDUBON HAROLD LEAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY	David Higgins dcjmhiggins@hotmail.com 785-577-2409 The 67 acre Sanctuary located at 2800 West Stimmel Road is open to the public from dawn to dusk and has 2.5+ miles of hiking trails of prairie, woodlands and pond banks.
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