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### News From the Flock, Vol. 2008 Issue 1

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

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# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society  
Serving Crawford, Bourbon, and Cherokee Counties, Kansas

## SGAS Officers

2007-2008

### President:

Mavis Benner

### Vice President:

Jim Brumfield

### Secretary

Barb Robins

### Treasurer

Liz Mangile

JANUARY 2008

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 1

## How I Became a Birder

by Delia Lister

It was a cold, misty, early Saturday morning in January 2005 at the Ford Farm. It was the kind of day where most people would want to stay in bed and not venture outside. I couldn't do this, of course. I had signed up for an ornithology class, and was REQUIRED to go birding during non class hours, including weekend mornings. The nerve of that Dr. Steve Ford!

I have to admit, I already had a couple of field classes under my belt including one where I even attempted to study birds. However, I thought it was extremely difficult to learn field marks, let alone bird calls. I had even taken a trip to the Amazon where I thought the birds were neat, but they weren't my favorite part of the trip. I kept getting frustrated because they were hard to find, and I had little practice at using my binoculars to spot a bird. I just kept thinking to myself "How can anyone enjoy something so difficult?"

Once again on that cold Saturday morning at the Ford Farm I was becoming very frustrated. My binoculars kept fogging up and I couldn't spot a bird long enough to remember field marks to look it up

in my book. After an hour (the required minimum time) I was cold, wet, frustrated, and really starting to wonder if I was going to do very well in this class.

I started walking toward the house, ready to leave when Steve stepped out to say hello and ask how I was doing. After explaining my troubles it would have been very easy for him to say: "Well, better luck next time," and leave me frustrated. But he didn't--he actually took time out of his early Saturday morning to work with me.

I don't know exactly how much time we spent watching birds at various feeders around the house, but by the time we were finished I was excited. He coached me, asking me questions like "Is there a stripe on the eye? What does the tail look like? Does it have a crest? What does its belly look like?"

FINALLY, the light bulb clicked on. I felt like I was discovering a whole new world. Only it really wasn't "new." I had just never taken the time to really observe what was going on around me--in the trees, on the ground, in the bushes, or in the air. After that morning (and a better set of bin-

oculars), I had a hard time NOT looking for birds. As the semester progressed I became a better and better birder and enjoyed myself more and more. Although it was one of the most difficult classes I had ever had, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

It's now hard for me to believe that just a few years ago I was almost completely ignorant about something that I now enjoy a great deal. A few years ago, I would have never dreamed that I would love working with birds on a regular basis and be so involved in an Audubon Society.

Of course I still have much more to learn, but I'm not sure I would be where I am today if it were not for the extra time someone like Steve had taken to show me what I had been missing. The passion that both he and his wife, Cindy, have for the natural world is inspiring on a daily basis--not only me, but to many others. I will always be grateful for the tools I was given to become a better birder and naturalist.

Today I find myself saying "How can anyone NOT enjoy birding?" All it takes is practice, a little patience, a good pair of binoculars, and a great teacher.

## Calendar of Events

**Jan. 31st**—"Recycling Connection to Wildlife and Birds," by Dr. Jim Triplett, PSU Biology Dept.

**Feb. 28th**—"A Trip to A Georgia Barrier Island" by Delia Lister, PSU Biology Department. Come see what land and sea life a group of PSU students, teachers, and SGAS Audubon members learned about last summer on a 10 day immersion camping trip to Sapelo Island, Georgia.



A larger than life cardinal makes his rounds with Mavis Benner and Liz Mangile at the Pittsburg Christmas Parade.

### MEETING TIME

We will begin our

meetings at

**7:30 P.M.**

Yates Hall Room 102.  
On the last Thursday  
of the month

## Thanksgiving Birds

After finding the red-throated loon last Thanksgiving, John and Julie thought it couldn't get any better.

Searching online bird lists, they found that a black tailed gull and snow buntings were sighted in Des Moines, Iowa where they would be visiting.

John went out with his brother-in-law, Chuck Safris, Thanksgiving morning. They found the black tailed gull at Saylorville Lake with the help of a fellow



from Ontario and his Zeiss scope about eight in the morning. It was cavorting with

ring billed gulls and was easily distinguished by a black back and tail. They got a good view even with binoculars.

On the way back to the car, snow buntings were

sighted in the gravel area beside the parking lot. Snow buntings are usually not found

south of northern Kansas and Missouri.

John and Julie visited family in Minneapolis.

They went by Black Dog Lake, and Julie got to see a herring gull for the first time. On the way back to Des Moines, they went by Saylorville Lake. No luck with the gull, but they did see the snow buntings, this time in the parking lot where they



have been seen before. Good birding again this year.

By John Hartley

## General Meeting Minutes

President Mavis Benner gave her welcome and acknowledged the unusual number of students and younger people.

### Announcements:

Delia Lister reported that the Research Reserve Lab is almost finished and demonstrated the dramatic difference by showing us "before" and "after" photos. Mavis thanked everyone for the work on the bird feeding seminar at the public library. Due to the newspaper's omission of the location, attendance was lower than hoped. The bird seed sale is ready to go on December 8, 9:00-5:00, at Meadowbrook Mall. Bob Mangile called for more volunteers to load feed.

John Hegel has made two barn owl boxes, and he was given a round of applause.

There are still a few Kansas Bird Guide books for sale at \$10 each. Bob Mangile told us that SGAS

volunteers have completed 80 blue-bird boxes, and they will be for sale at the seed sale for \$5 each.

The parade float with penguin and iceberg looked great; so did the sandwich signs urging us to help stop global warming, and John Hartley's antics in the cardinal suit made by Carol Newcomb.

### Wing Tips:

Barb Robins shared a brief anecdote about her close encounter with a red-breasted nuthatch (he ate from the suet feeder while she held it), and noted the unusual abundance due to an "irruption" from the boreal forests in Minnesota and Canada.

### Featured Speaker:

Jim Brumfield introduced Dr. David Gordon, PSU associate professor, who was recently selected and trained by Al Gore and his team of scientists and educators to present a version of "An Inconvenient Truth." The graphic evidence presented

emphasized the science behind the assertion that carbon dioxide in our climate has greatly increased due to human activity. Dramatic photographs

showed the disappearing glaciers and polar ice caps. Global temperatures are increasing at an accelerated rate. The good news is that major corporations

are beginning to realize the profits to be made by addressing the problem. Gore's documentary emphasizes that people can begin fixing the problem by reducing emissions. We can effect efficient energy consumption in homes, schools, and businesses by simply changing the type of light bulbs. Dr. Gordon urged us to obtain

more information on the science behind global warming, and to find out how to determine our carbon footprint by "Googling" these subjects on

the Internet.

### More Announcements:

The door prize was won by Mr. Webb. Field trips (John Hartley): On December 13, the Missouri Dept. of Conservation is leading a short-eared owl hike at the Shawnee Trail Conservation Area. John will also lead a walk at the same area on December 15. Christmas Bird Counts: December 29, Parsons; January 1, Crawford and Cherokee Counties; January 3, Joplin; January 5, Prairie State Park. These are posted on Bob Mangile's SGAS website.

**Next Meeting:** January 31.



## Starting the Year Right

January 1, 2008 five SGAS members and five Gateway Audubon members loaded their luggage into two vans and hustled on their way to South Padre Island for a birding trip. The group visited several birding spots trying to see birds of the Rio Grande valley and add new birds to their life lists. The group visited Boca Chica beach where the Rio Grande runs into the Gulf. Along the road a couple of grooved billed Anis were spotted. On the beach



were lots of jelly fish and sanderlings scurrying along there too. The birding center at South Padre is always full of interesting birds. The clapper rail, piping plovers, roseate spoonbills, and almost all the egrets were seen. Santa Anna and Sable Palm

refuges were visited, the Brownsville landfill, the Resaca by the university in Brownsville and the Estero Llano Grande wildlife area held various species to delight the Kansas and Missouri birders. Other sightings were a rare dusky capped flycatcher, green jays, kiskadees, 3 species of kingfishers, vermilion flycatcher, MacGillivray's warbler and a pair of Aplomada falcons along with many other birds that are found only in the southern tip of Texas. The group returned and talking about going again soon. Be sure to go with the group next time!

by Mavis Benner

**Board Meeting Minutes**

By Barb Robins

**Attending:** Mavis Benner, Jim Brumfield, Steve Ford, John & Julie Hartley, John & Sue Hegel, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Carol Newcomb, Barb Robins, Jordyn Newcomb (guest)  
**Call To Order:** Done so by President Benner at 6:05 p.m. Minutes from Meeting: Approved as submitted.

**Treasurer's Report (Liz):** Balance of \$3,372.96 in checking account.

**Unfinished Business:**  
 Bird Feeding Education Program: Do we want to do it again? Possible re-presentations could be at the Girard Public Library, and Joplin and Parsons Audubon meetings. Sentiment seemed to be in favor. **Bird Seed Sale (Bob):** Empty spots in shifts signup sheet were attempted to be filled. John will wear the cardinal suit Carol made for the parade. **Bluebird House Project (Steve):** Some have been stained, others are natural, and they are ready to go. **Barn Owl House (J. Hegel):** Two houses are made. Bob has ideas for mounting them. It was moved (Liz), seconded (Barb), and passed that we allot \$50 for posts and concrete to mount. **Kansas Bird Guide (Liz):** We have sold 98

**books and have 5 extra. Nature Photography Contests**

**(Delia):** Dr. Timme has agreed to judge if someone will write rules. In conjunction with the contest, should we have a silent auction? Sentiment was in favor.

**Research Farm Prairie Plot**

**(Delia):** Dirt is spread in front of cages; Cindy Ford will order seed soon. Bob presented Delia with a personal check for \$300, as he offered at last meeting.

**New Business:**

**Field Trips (John):** He and others plan to attend the short-eared owl hike led by Missouri Dept. of Conservation on December 13; he will also take people on the 15th who weren't able to go on the 13th. On Feb. 2, we will go to the recycling center for a tour, after which we can do some birding. On March 22, we will bird at the Nature Reach Research Farm; in May, we can attend a Chris Pistole-led flower walk at Wildcat Glades. **Christmas Bird Count Dates (Bob):** December 29, Parsons; January 1, SEK; January 3, Joplin; and January 5, Prairie State Park. **Picnic Plans:** We will have it at the Nature Reach Reserve Farm. Meeting adjourned at 6:50.

**WANTED:**

Persons to give "Wing Tips"

**Just to keep our focus on birds a little, each meeting before the main program speaker, a member, who volunteers or who is gently persuaded will give a brief presentation, just 5 or 10 minutes. The volunteer can choose a bird and give the description for identification, describe the birds call, tell about its behavior, its nest, what it eats, any facts that seem interesting. The presenter can show a picture or what ever they choose to share with the group. There are a lot of birds so we can do this a long time. The volunteer can chose their favorite bird or one that interests them or one that is unique.**



**Short Eared Owls**

By J. and J. Hartley

We only had one response to the club walk about short-eared owls so here are some facts in case any of the newer people who have not seen the owls would be interested in a short-eared owl walk. Unlike most owls, short-eared owls are ground nesters and social. They like to nest



together, and birders get them off the ground and flying when they do an owl walk. Unlike

most owls, short-eared owls may hunt at dawn, dusk, during the night or during the day. They fly low over fields and locate their prey by sound.

Short-eared owls are found on every continent except Australia and their numbers are dwindling due to loss of habitat. It is a very special thing that we have these birds wintering in our area.

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The owls also winter to-



January Newsletter "Wing Tip"

**Snow Bunting**

If you think winter in Southeast Kansas is cold, then meet the

snow bunting. It breeds farther North than almost any other land bird and flies South to winter in the balmy North and Central U.S. and Southern Canada. One can find them mostly in small flocks on open fields and shorelines seeking out seeds and small insects. These buntings are well adapted to keeping warm as they can withstand temperatures to -40 degrees Fahrenheit. They do this by sinking low into the snow to keep from exposing their legs and feet to the outside air. That's one tough bird!

**Featured Bird coming in February...**

Dear Audubon Members,  
 I can't tell you how much I appreciate your generous donation toward the creation of the "Sperry Prairie" at the PSU Research Reserve. It will be a welcome addition to our new raptor cages and new building.  
 Delia Lister, PSU Nature Reach

**Bird Seed Sale Results**

\$3260.50 Monies that we took in.  
 \$2025.00 KAMO for feed

-----  
 \$1235.50  
 147.83 State Tax

-----  
 \$1087.67 Total Profit  
 \$487.18 Profit from feed

-----  
 \$600.49 Craft and Bake sale profit



We sold more feed, and also more crafts and bake goods this year. Congratulations to every one for all the hard work!



A big thanks to all of the hard work on the bluebird boxes. This was a great success!

**Application for Membership  
Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society**

For an introductory rate of \$20.00 you will become a member of both organizations, receive 4 copies of Audubon Magazine annually and the Sperry-Galligar Newsletter.

For rate of \$15.00 you will become a member of Sperry-Galligar Audubon and receive the regular 8 newsletters per year informing you of all our local activities.

If you wish to join the National as well as the Local Chapter : Please make your check out to: National Audubon Society

If you wish to join just the Local Sperry Galligar Audubon : Please make your check out to Sperry Galligar Audubon.

And mail to:

**Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 205  
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762-0205**

- YES I wish to become a member, of both organizations (\$20.00)
- YES I wish to become a member of the local chapter only (\$15.00)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Code: J 10 7XCH



**FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
By Liz Mangile**

November through December 2007

**Starting balance** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$3156.38**

**CREDITS**

National Audubon yearly payment \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 447.75  
 13 Compact Guide to Ks. Birds Books \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 130.00  
 Money from feed sale \_\_\_\_\_ \$3435.00  
 Misc. \_\_\_\_\_ \$90.50  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$4103.25**

**DEBITS**

28 Compact Guide to Ks. Birds \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 241.44  
 New Horizons Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ \$19.73  
 Money for cash box \_\_\_\_\_ \$100.00  
 KAMO payment for feed \_\_\_\_\_ \$2025.00  
**Total** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$2386.17**

**Ending Balance** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$4873.46**

**Hey what a team!**

I am bursting to say, "Thanks" to every single person who contributed in any way to help the annual bird seed sale be a great success. So many persons baked, made crafts, built bird houses, loaded seed bags, purchased seed and so on. It was unbelievable. The variety of baked goods was fantastic and the few items that remained were frozen and will be served at the next meeting.

SGAS sent a great message to the community to feed the birds, put up houses for blue birds and other birds. Just under 100 copies of the "Compact Guide to Kansas Birds" guide books were sold and we are carrying out our mission of conservation and education about birds and nature to the public. **YOU DID GOOD!**

Thanks again!

Mavis Benner  
Chapter President



**Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society**

**Newsletter  
P.O. Box 205**

**Pittsburg, KS 66762**

**Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month. No meetings in June July, or August. (Nov/Dec meeting date to be announced) From 7:30 pm to 9 pm, in Room 102, Yates Hall. PSU Campus, Pittsburg, Kansas. Refreshments served and Guests Welcome.**

**January  
2008**



Articles for submission may be sent to  
 SGAS Newsletter editor-  
 Delia Lister  
 delialister@hotmail.com OR dalister@pittstate.edu  
 Published monthly  
 Next Deadline is February 6, 2008!

**Attention All  
Members**

If this box is checked, our records indicate that your membership has expired. Please consider paying local membership dues. Our chapter receives 100% of the local dues only. **HOWEVER**, you can subscribe to both. Either way you get the newsletter.