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News From the Flock, Vol. 2012 Issue 2

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

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NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry- Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2011-2013

President:

Meagan Duffee

Vice President:

Martha Price

Secretary

Barb Robins

Treasurer

Liz Mangile

Newsletter Editor

Cindy Ford

cford@pittstate.edu

February 2012

VOLUME 2012 ISSUE 2

Southeast Kansas Birders Bag Life List Trophies and Have a Great Time!

Ground hog day, February 2, looked to be a great day to be out of the house and into nature. Martha Price, Carolyn & Charlie Chips, Kolby & Bailey headed out toward Neosho Wildlife Area to do some birding. They did not expect to see too many birds but the day was too good to let pass. Just west of town was a flock of wild turkeys, 30 on either side of the road. This was promising.

The morning turned to afternoon and since the dogs were along there was no need to return home to let them out so lunch was eaten at St Paul Café and birding continued.

Total at the end of the day was 40 species (that was remembered). This included the 9 trumpeter swans that are wintering at Neosho Wildlife Area, a pileated woodpecker that flew across our field of view at good viewing range (what a bird!), a pair of adult bald eagles sitting in a tree side by side, and eastern and western meadowlarks in concert together (a beautiful sound).

Ducks were seen with feathers of blue, red, green, white-sided, white- backed and ringed-necked "gadwalling" and "shoveling" about with coots and grebes in toe. Canada, cackling, snow, Ross's and white-fronted geese were swimming around as well.

Overlooking this watery collection were hawks with red tails or shoulders, Cooper's, Harriers as well as little Kestrels, red bellied, downy & hairy woodpeckers. Mourning doves, cardinals, blue Jays, blue-, black- & cow- birds, ring-billed and Bonaparte gulls finished off the day.

After six hours of birding, five very tired bodies turned home to dream of birds and days to come.

Martha Price

Nine of us met at the Pittsburg north McDonalds for breakfast on Saturday, January 28, 2012 for a trip to a Jasper County, Missouri Conservation Area and the Wildcat Glades Nature Center near Joplin, MO. Shortly after entering the conservation area, we found Emmett Sullivan sitting in his pick-up across the road from a Snowy Owl. The owl was most cooperative and everyone had a chance to take several pictures from their vehicle and enjoy this bird "up close and personal." The snowy owl was a life bird for everyone in the group but the Chips who had

seen one recently at Smithville Lake, Missouri. What a magnificent bird!

We then proceeded on to Wildcat Glades and checked out the Nature Center before enjoying a couple of walks on the trails. We observed approximately 40 species on a warm and beautiful day.

There will not be a field trip for February as the Chips will be in Texas looking for new birds to add to their life lists.

Please join us on March 31 when we will meet at Big Brutus at 8 a.m. for Emmitt Sullivan to lead us on a hike to a Great Blue Heron rookery (weather permitting).

Carolyn Chips

It was a beautiful Saturday morning when a group of hearty SGAS members took off to see the elusive snowy owl. We had an idea where the owl was located, because the day before some of us had heard where he was hanging out and had found him.

Off we went over by Asbury, Mo. driving down the road when low and behold there he was on a sign post right on the side of the road. What a site to see. We sat there for about 15 minutes and watched him and took lots of pictures. It was amazing. Wish the whole group had been there to see him. What a great day!

Mavis Benner called me about 11:00AM on Friday and said Carolyn Chips had called her and said there was a Snowy Owl over by Asbury, Mo. I took off and headed to see if I could find the owl. On the way I picked up Elma Hurt and hurried over there. WOW!! There he was out in the middle of a green field. What a magnificent sight to see. While we were watching Carolyn, Charlie and Martha Price showed up and shortly up came Mavis and Ray. We all really got a good look and took a few pictures. Made my day and also my life list.

Liz Mangile



February Presentation Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

Feb 23: Hobby Beekeeping: Getting Started (And Staying with It)

by Dan Mosier II, Farlington Fish Hatchery Biologist. Dan will address how to get started in beekeeping, including equipment needed, where to get equipment, how to acquire bees, hive maintenance, and basic honey bee biology.

THANKS
FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER
ARTICLES!

Board Meeting Highlights Barb Robins, Secretary

Attending: Mavis and Ray Benner, Carolyn & Charles Chips, Meagan Duffee, Cindy & Steve Ford, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Martha Price, Barb Robins, Emmett & Ruth Sullivan..

Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance is \$3,944.13.

Programs (Martha): February 23's will be Dan Moshier on bee care.

Bird Seed Sale (Bob): We cleared \$450 (343 on seed, 110-115 on other). Concern was expressed about the disproportional amount of milo in the seed mix. Discussion ensued re changing the sale date. No action taken.

Field Trips (Carolyn): Saturday we're going to the Wildcat Glades and looking for the Snowy owl on the way. Meet at McDonald's for breakfast at 7:30. There will be no trip in February.

New Eagle (Delia): Apollo has arrived at the Natural History Reserve and is acclimating nicely.

CBC (Steve): The species count was down this year; 46 were sighted.

Kansas State Audubon (Bob): He suggested we contribute \$250 to support their good efforts in the state. Moved, seconded, and approved.

Meeting Time (Cindy): She proposed that the board meet at 6:00 rather than 5:45.

Financial Statement Liz Mangile, Treasurer

February, 2012

Beginning Balance----- \$3512.35

Credits

Local Dues	68.75
Deposit from Nat. Audubon	447.75
Total.....	\$ 516.50

Debits

Newsletter	\$ 15.97
Refreshments for January	10.00
Donation to Audubon of KS	250.00

Total----- \$ 275.97

Ending balance----- \$3752.88

From my Nest Meagan Duffee, President



Recently, I have discovered a new passion that allows me to be outside. Its something that anyone can do and I personally find that people of all ages can relish in this pretty easy and laid back "sport". I am talking about looking for deer sheds, the antlers which bucks lose after their mating season. Once their testosterone levels go back down to normal deer no longer require the attractive antlers, and thus lose their antlers during December-late February. I have begun doing this in part for my masters project of learning taxidermy, in which I can use the shed antlers as part of my base mounts for my specimens.

Looking for deer sheds allows a person to learn the habits of local deer, see the health of the herd and get to know the migration routes of deer in their area. A person can simply look in an urban setting for deer sheds or out in the country. Its a great way to get outdoors, start being more healthy and in the process have that great feeling when you put in hours of looking and finally come home with a deer shed that leaves you asking questions regarding that particular deer. Get outside and enjoy it!

Remember also that we do not have a field trip planned for this month, so this is a perfect opportunity to get outside and enjoy yourself!



Needed: Audubon Meeting Refreshment Hostess.

Chapter funds provided to buy cookies and other treats.

Please contact Liz Mangile.



Megan Corrigan SGAS member donated two stuffed Imperial Amazon parrots for door prizes in January. One winner was Rob Springer of Prescott KS and the other winner was Charles Chips of Girard KS. The SGAS door prize of a 3-tube bird feeder was won by Jean

January Featured Speaker: Chanda Williams



How can we spend more time with butterflies? Chanda Williams, naturalist, supplied an excellent, natural way to accomplish that in her presentation. "Jewels in the Sky". By creating a butterfly garden—growing plants which attract butterflies to nectar and larvae food—we can be assured of increasing our butterfly viewing pleasure.

Chanda outlined steps to creating such a garden: (1) take a survey of the area, noting species already present (she gave us ID-ing tips); (2) decide what species (including moths) you want to attract, and decide whether you want the adult or larval forms or both; (3) choose a garden location and structure; (5) maintain the health of the garden, using diversification and not pesticides.

Chanda gave us information on Monarch Watch and its attempts to restore the decreasing population due to habitat degradation, urban sprawl, genetically modified crops, and roadside mowing/spraying.

In spite of the mild winter, we are more than ready to view and welcome the jewels.



Monarch butterfly on black-eyed Susans

January Refreshments: Thanks to Mavis Benner & Donna Mansell



CRITTER CONNECTIONS by Bob Mangile

SORA RAIL

One day in June 2006 Liz summoned me to come-see an unusual bird at our small, lily-filled pond. What a surprise to find a sora rail, *Porzana carolina*, roaming the exposed shoreline and wandering around among the water lilies. Our pond has both spatterdock (sometimes called cow lilies) and fragrant water lilies. The leaves of spatterdock rise above the water but the fragrant water lilies lay flat on the water's surface, which allowed easy walking for the long-toed Sora.

Soras are regular area spring migrants in April and in the past we've had them at our pond. I've seen them dive "under" the water when surprised – and they can swim, too. Many years ago we found one dead on our driveway - due to a probable collision with the utility lines in front of our house during their night migration. It was donated to the PSU collection.

Back to the story! As the days passed it was apparent that the bird was settled in for a lengthy stay at the pond. The water level shrank as the summer wore on, making it easy to observe. We notified several area birders and some came to view the bird. At times it would fly across the water but it was quite secretive. Nesting was suspected but there was only one bird and both the males and females of this species incubate.

During his visit, birder Larry Herbert of Joplin, got a good look at the bird and noticed that its left wing was slightly drooped down, possibly explaining why the bird was here, i.e., it was injured! It stayed all summer and as fall approached we wondered whether it would stay the winter or head south. After a few cold nights we did not observe it again. Perhaps Mother Nature imposed her will and the bird made an attempt to fly South. We will never know! We took periodic photos; the last one (shown) was on October 22, 2006.

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Note: There are several species of rail in the US. Rails have a vertically compressed body that allows them to walk through reeds and cattails with ease, hence, the adage "thin as a rail". The sora rail is about nine inches long. One unsuspecting species, the American coot, is also a rail. Interesting. Huh?



The Eagle has Landed

Delia Lister

Just a few days before Thanksgiving 2010 we were saddened by the loss of the resident Nature Reach bald eagle, Aurora. She was quite a special bird to us as she was one of the first birds to be a part of the program in the late 1980's. We knew it would be a while before we had the opportunity to find another bird to be just that perfect fit to the program. In the meantime, we spoke with Westar Energy's Green Team about the possibility of building a new eagle enclosure that would be large enough to house either a non-flighted or flighted bald eagle. Then, on October 25, 2011, a young male bald eagle was discovered on the ground near Norwich, KS and taken to the Eagle Valley Raptor Center just outside of Wichita, KS. He had most likely been shot as X-Rays revealed metal fragments in his wing. It was estimated that he had been on the ground for close to two weeks as he was about half of normal body weight. Once it was determined that he was not going to be releasable we started the process of getting federal and state approval to obtain the bird for education. We were also fortunate enough to have Westar agree to build another cage (with the help of SGAS volunteers, of course) for us just in time to get the eagle, which we now call "Apollo". On Friday, January 20, my Assis-

tant Naturalist (and SGAS President!) and I made the drive to Wichita to pick up Apollo. It was a long day for us, but I am sure not nearly as long for Apollo. It took a few days for him to decide he felt safe enough to eat in front of us, but he has now developed a healthy appetite and is getting more and more comfortable with us with each passing day. He is a little stubborn, but we hope he will turn out to be a great "Animal Ambassador". I want to say thank you again to all of the volunteers that helped make his home such a nice one!

Although he will not live out his days in the wild, Apollo's story has a happy ending. It is not always the case for birds that have been shot. Many of them are shot with lead shot, giving them lead poisoning which is often a death sentence. Please educate hunters and even fishermen about the dangers of using lead ammunition and lead sinkers. Lead sinkers can end up on the bottom of a lake where fish ingest the lead and are then eaten by eagles. Sinkers can also be picked up by water fowl as well that are highly susceptible to poisoning. Deer parts are often left in a pile, and if the hunter used lead shot, there is a potential to be leftover lead in the carcass, often scavenged by raptors. There are plenty of alternatives to lead so I hope everyone can do their part of help educate and prevent lead poisoning.

<http://www.greentackle.com/>

Sightings



Apollo



Send your newsletter articles, bird sightings, and nature notes to C. Ford by March 10.

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

For first-time local membership, send \$20.00 and you will become a member of both organizations, receive 4 copies of Audubon Magazine annually and 8 copies of Sperry-Galligar Newsletter. *Please make your check to: National Audubon Society.*

___ *YES I wish to become a FIRST-TIME member of both organizations (\$20.00).*

To renew your membership, send \$15.00 and you will become a member of Sperry-Galligar Audubon and receive the regular 8 newsletters per year informing you of all our local activities. *Please make your check to: Sperry-Galligar Audubon*

___ *YES I wish to become a RENEWING member of the local chapter (\$15.00).*

Future National Renewals: Contact National directly for Audubon Magazine.

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

Please Print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

e-mail address _____

Chapter Code: C2ZJ100Z



Chapter Field Trip Calendar

March 31, 2012: Heron Rookery, West Mineral, KS. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Big Brutus. Emmett Sullivan will then lead us to a great blue heron rookery. We will also look for early shorebirds and other birds at nearby strip pits. Driving and walking tour.

April 28, 2012: Warblers & Spring Migrants, Roaring River State Park, MO. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Applebees in Pittsburg to carpool to Roaring River to see spring warbler varieties and other spring migrants such as scarlet tanager, painted buntings, etc. Driving and walking tour. Habitat is such that one can find a picnic table and just sit and watch for species or take one of the many hiking trails over the hills of the park and look down on species. This will be an all day trip as it is about two hours to the park. Bring snacks, lunch and dress accordingly.

May 19, 2012: Restored Prairie Habitat, Max Good property, Parsons, KS Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Applebees in Pittsburg to carpool to Parsons to view various native flowers, grasses, insects, birds, & trees in a native prairie restoration project.

To help you identify birds online, the Cornell Lab's web team is building a new tool called "Merlin." Merlin will use artificial intelligence to ask questions and provide suggestions to help you identify what you saw. First, though, Merlin needs to know how people observe and describe birds. Help populate Merlin's "brain" by trying [Mark My Bird](#), an online activity that asks 18 questions about a species. Play as often as you like to help us build Merlin faster! I tried it once and it's easy. Here's the website: <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/labs/applications/mmb/ACintro.aspx> (from Diane McCollum)



**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 7:00 pm to 9 pm, in Room 102, Yates
Hall. PSU Campus, Pittsburg, KS.
Refreshments served and Guests Welcome.**



Visit our website:

<http://sperry-galligar.com/>

**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.

