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News From the Flock, Vol. 2013 Issue 4

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 Duffoe

Vice President:

Mavis Benner

Secretary

Barb Robins

Treasurer

Liz Mangle

Newsletter Editor

Cindy Ford

cford@pittstate.edu

April 2013

VOLUME 2013 ISSUE 4

FEEDING LEON by Bob Mangle

While sitting in our patio swing on May 19, 2012, I



noticed that a lone large black ant was near my feet. I recalled seeing it during the past few days and my curiosity got the best of me. Allow me to explain. OK? This was a single black ant, not a caravan of ants. There were only a few other large black ants on the concrete scattered about but this one, I named Leon, caught my attention. Normal folks go fishing, watch movies, play cards and never miss a public event but I enjoy observing nature. (I've never been accused of being "normal"! Please read on.)

So here is the **skinny** on the lone large black ant (probably a sterile female Carpenter Ant). When we sit in the patio swing we swat flies that pester us. And it became apparent that the ant would come to the swing and get the dead flies and carry them back to its nest. After realizing what was taking place I began to offer the dead flies to the ant from the corner of the flyswatter. It became a game. It hauled the dead fly to its nest and a few minutes later it came walking back to get another fly. After it hauled away 6-8 flies I was summoned away and when I returned I asked my wife, Liz, if she had

been careful not to step on Leon. She said that Leon took about five more flies from her offerings.

During my watch at least one other large black ant crossed in front of the swing but it continued on into the grass, apparently not aware of the bounty of dead flies it passed. Or, perhaps, each one had a predetermined route, like a mail carrier. We seem to understand why a fox returns to the hen house for a meal or a hummingbird returns to a sugar feeder but ants aren't really thought of as intelligent critters.

I have no rational explanation as to how a likely female ant was given the name Leon! <smile> One would think that Leon would be an uncle to some ants in the colony but in fact Leon could have been an ant ant! Go figure!

Facts: Carpenter ants belong to the genus *Camponotus*. These large ants are excavators, not wood feeders and are so named for their skill at constructing their homes from wood. Most build their nests in dead or decaying trees or logs, though they do also inhabit landscape timbers and wooden structures, including people's homes. They are most active at night and will forage for honeydew - the sweet, sticky excrement left behind by aphids. They'll also eat fruits, plant juices, other small insects and invertebrates, grease or fat, and anything sweet, like jelly or syrup. # # #

April Meeting
7:00 p.m.
Yates 102
PSU Campus
Presentation

April 25 — "Are you Smarter than the Average Birder?" by Della Lister, Director of PSU Nature Reach

Test your knowledge of birds with this quiz format. You will not receive a grade.

To receive an e-newsletter, send your e-mail address to Cindy Ford, Editor.

Pittsburg State University (Kansas)



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Board Meeting Highlights
Barb Robins, Secretary

Attending: Meagan Duffee, Cindy Ford, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Barb Robins, Emmett & Ruth Sullivan.
Call To Order (Meagan): 6:00 p.m.
Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance of \$4,500.87
Next Program: Delia will present.
Field Trip: Nothing presently scheduled.
Education Trip Geared to PSU Students: There was no response to Meagan's Facebook inquiry.
Racing Turtles: Delia displayed an almost-completed prototype. As soon as she finishes it, she will contact the newspaper for a story and will schedule a presentation. She asked SGAS for \$44.19 as compensation for supplies to make the turtles: moved, seconded, and approved.
Slate of Officers: We need to appoint a committee to present names to elect a president and vice president for next year.
May Picnic: Homer Cole center is rented; we will furnish chicken, and members will bring sides. Donna Smith will make a presentation on photographing wildlife.
 Meeting adjourned at 6:15.

DOOR PRIZES

Emmett Sullivan, West Mineral, won a box of Girl Scout cookies as well as Meagan Duffee, Nevada, MO, taking a box home. A mug, drink mix, and Angry Bird gummies was won by Linda Phipps, Galena. "Good Birders don't Wear White" book was taken home by Joe Bourmonville, Pittsburg.

Financial Statement
Liz Mangile, Treasurer

March 2013

Beginning Balance	\$4,683.46
Debits	
Newsletter, room for Chuck Otte, refreshments, KS Native Plant Society membership	
Total	\$ 126.62
Credits	
Local dues, ant molts	
Total	\$ 74.00
Ending balance	\$ 4,630.84

March Audubon Presentation
Matt Gearhart

We were highly privileged to have Matt Gearhart, Shawnee, visit us and share the fruits of his "Birding, Southern Ecuador" trip in the form of narration, photos, and internet images. Matt is one of the foremost birders in Kansas and is currently the vice president of the Kansas Ornithological Society and trustee for Audubon of Kansas.



Ecuador is the size of Colorado, but there is no country in the world richer in habitat variety and number of species (1600). While we are thrilled to see seven species of woodpeckers in Southeast Kansas, Ecuador has 53! Matt saw 563 bird species and experienced in a mere fifteen days a tremendous variety of environments, including coasts, mangrove swamps, montane cloud forests, arid scrub deserts, tropical forests, elfin (high-altitude) and deciduous forests.

While it was highly interesting and informative to see the colorful birds and their habitats, Matt gave us a bonus by narrating and showing the places he stayed, the towns he visited, and the people and cultures he observed. Being transported to the equator on a chilly March evening was an experience hard to beat.

Barb Robins



General Meeting Happenings — March 2013

Bird Sightings: Broad-winged hawk, Turkey vultures, Pelicans, Purple martins, Cedar waxwings

We need nominations next time for next year's president and vice president.

The picnic will be May 30 at the Homer Cole Center. Chicken will be furnished; please bring sides. Donna Smith will do a presentation on photographing wildlife.

Next month's program will be on bird ID-ing by Delia Lister. Thanks to Julie Hartley for her donation of 20 boxes of Girl Scout cookies.

One of our members, Diane McCallum has had a novel, *Outsider*, published, and it is available at Hastings and amazon.com (print and e-book).

Vicky Cassidy announced that the Joplin chapter will host a program by Brian Davis, MSSU, on the evolution of birds on April 11 at the Wildcat Glades nature center.

Barb Robins

BIRDWATCHING

WHAT TO WEAR WHEN BIRDING

by Martha Price

Avoid anything that reflects in the UV. Avoid bright colors as a general rule. Avoid wearing white. Do wear camo and subdued colors that match natural surroundings, especially when you intend to sit still. Sitting still means not only that you are seated, but also that you make yourself appear as small as possible and your arms and head are also still. Restrict your body movements at all times. Keep this in mind when hawkwatching, too. When you do move, move slowly and smoothly. Avoid jerky and fast movements.

Disrupt the outline of your face and eyes. Wear a hat, or a baseball cap, to help hide your face and eyes from birds. Use your peripheral vision to sneak peeks. Never stare at a bird unless it is some

species that is known to accept scares, e.g., eagles. Look off to the side of the bird about 30 degrees and pan across to 30 degrees on the other side of it, stopping only long enough to capture a look. Then look away, and do it again. Learn "intention" movements and stop for a while if the bird is behaving as if it might fly. After it settles down, pan again.

Think about how uncomfortable you were the last time you noticed someone staring at you. This is the case for birds also - they look to see who is looking back. They know to watch for peering eyes and the ones that are still alive are good at it. The bird on a branch looking back at you is looking at your eyes to see what you are up to. Frequently turn your head and body away, looking off to the side of the bird, and then peek out from under your cap to

try to sneak a candid camera view. The point of this is that no matter what color clothing you have, if your big ole round face is sticking out like a neon sign then you've failed to pay attention to the part of you that stands out the most to birds.

Too many birders see "intention" movements then think they have to get a good look before the bird is gone. They don't realize that in doing so they are actually pushing the bird to fly. Learn to be patient. We take up birding because we want to stop to smell the roses, then we get so caught up in list-and-run birding we still never take time to smell the roses. Birdwatching is the activity that encourages us to use our time to look closely at birds for more than their field marks. (Taken in part from About Birding.com)

NUTHATCH SHOPPING SPREE

by Larry Herbert



White-breasted nuthatch males and females are distinguishable. The male has a much darker cap. Two

of them were in my backyard this morning. I gave myself a hair trim since my gray hair was getting shabby and I tossed it out back for the birds. Sure enough the male picked up a tuft of it and flew to a cavity in the neighbor's yard. I mention this since I thought that only the female builds the nest in the nuthatch world. Um—I will check my literature further. Hair cut looks nice.

COOPER'S HAWK BUFFET

by Cindy Ford

Watching a bird feeder can be fun since a great diversity of birds can be seen easily from the windows. Unfortunately, several birds during the height of the feeding season hit the windows since they detect a "way through the window". Most, I have to say, are fairly resilient. They may be stunned for a few minutes, but

recover and fly away. Occasionally they fall to the ground and die.

A few weeks ago I was in our kitchen and heard a "thunk". I knew it was a bird that had tried to go through the house — without success. I was standing at the window to see what the fate of that bird was when I looked up to see a Cooper's hawk sitting on a branch very near the window. I did not move, trying to fade into the background of the hawk's perception. It perched there for several minutes looking around. Of course all of the birds had left the feeder, so I thought the hawk was waiting until one bird made the mistake to visit the feeder again. Suddenly the hawk swept off its perch, swooped down quickly near the house, picked up the unfortunate window-hit bird, and flew off with the bird. What an opportunist! The Cooper's hawk had probably seen the bird drop, so it was easier to hunt that bird than to try to grab an active one from the feeder. It is these unexpected moments of birdwatching that keeps the "sport" interesting.



Sightings.....



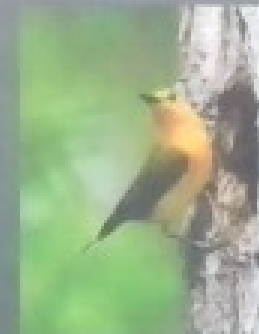
WHAT BIRDS ARE IN?



Blue-gray gnatcatcher



Parula warbler



Prothonotary warbler

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

Thanks to Megan Corrigan and Vicki Cassidy for the refreshments at the last meeting. If you would like to help with refreshments at the meetings, please contact Liz Mangile to get details. If you need to find out if you are already on the list for this year, please check the Sperry-Galligar Audubon website.

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

For first-time National Audubon membership, send \$20.00 and become a member of both organizations, receive 6 copies of Audubon Magazine annually and 8 copies of Sperry-Galligar Newsletter. *Please make your check to: Sperry-Galligar Audubon.*

YES I wish to become a **FIRST-TIME** member of National Audubon and Sperry-Galligar Audubon. (\$20.00).

For only local or renewal membership, send \$15.00 for membership of Sperry-Galligar Audubon and receive the 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 Audubon renewals: *Send Audubon mailer forms directly to National.*

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

Please Print



Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

e-mail address _____



Events,
&
Miscellany

Audubon May Picnic

Our May picnic will be May 30 from 6:00 PM till 9:00 PM at Homer Cole Community Center the same place we had it the last couple of years. The club will buy the chicken. In order for us to know how much chicken to order there will be a list sent around at our April meeting. You can also call Liz Mangile at 231-3117 or email Liz with the information at lwmowerlitz@cox.net.



RACE A BETTER TURTLE

Delia Lister, Bob Mangile, and Sylvia Schultze have constructed wooden turtles to use for races instead of deploying live box



**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**

Pay membership dues in September. 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.