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News From the Flock, Vol. 2016 Issue 1

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

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NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry- Galligar
Audubon Chapter
Officers 2016 - 2017

President:

Wayne Bockelman

Vice President:

Megan Corrigan

Secretary

Barb Robins

Treasurer

Liz Mangle

Newsletter Editor

Cindy Ford

cford@pittstate.edu

January 2016

VOLUME 2016 ISSUE 1

Annual Report Summary Wayne Bockelman, President

Each year Sperry-Galligar makes a report to National Audubon to let them know what we've done in the past year. It's a good opportunity to look back on our accomplishments and to summarize it here for our members.

We thank the members for their participation and for their attendance at our monthly meetings. Total attendance at meetings is up from 291 the previous year to 348 this past year. On the other hand, dues paying membership in our local chapter has dropped by three in the last three years. These are "family" memberships, and now that we're counting individuals, those numbers are way up.

Members and the public attended meetings because Megan reached out to find an excellent group of presenters again last year. We enjoyed programs on birds from Alaska to the Galapagos to the Mariana Islands of the Pacific. Closer to home, we saw how just adding water brings wetlands species to our area. We learned about bluebirds, Monarch butterflies and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. John James Audubon even paid us a visit, portrayed by a friend from Wildcat Glades.

Delia is to be congratulated for helping make eight field trips available to our members. In addition to our annual Swift Night Out and our Christmas Bird Count, we had an Owl Prowl at PSU's Nature Re-

serve in January and a trip to the Neosho Wildlife Area for waterfowl viewing in February. In March we saw short-eared owls hunting at dusk at Shawnee Trail Conservation Area, and in May Joe Neal led a trip to nearby Prairie State Park. Trips to the Ford's Farm and Stefanoni's Woods Edge showed us not only birds but also what we can do to invite them to our area.

We hosted a well-attended wildlife photography workshop. Members helped with Nature Reach's summer day camp for youngsters. Our major fundraiser, the annual bird seed sale, was quite successful. Cindy produced eight beautiful newsletters. Bob and the rest of the board kept things running smoothly.

We spent money. This past year, for the first time, we offered scholarships to four local high-school winners of the Eco-Meet in Greenbush. We also donated \$1000 to buy new reptile cages for PSU's Nature Reach program, so Delia can safely house the snakes she shows to grade-schoolers throughout the area. The good news is that in spite of these expenditures, the organization remained in the black and added a total of \$4.38 to our bank account for the year.

Congratulations on another fine year.



Jan 28 — "The Nature of Nature Reach: Running an Educational Outreach Program", by Delia Lister, Director of PSU's Nature Reach. Lister will give a presentation on history & activities of the PSU Nature Reach program. After the presentation the audience is invited for an informal tour of the Nature Reach room.

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

Sperry Galligar Audubon wishes to heartily thank Blue Ribbon Farm & Home for their generous donation of the trailer for our Bird Seed Sale. Thanks for going the extra mile for us!



Board Meeting Highlights Barb Robins, Secretary

Attending: Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Steve Ford, Della Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Barb Robins.

Call To Order (Wayne): 6:05 p.m.

Minutes: Read and approved.

Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance of 4,220.83.

Annual Report: Wayne has finished it. He summarized our expenditures and pointed out that we had a net profit of \$4.38. He will e-mail a PDF to Liz and file it in his president's notebook.

Programs: Tonight's was changed due to a death in the family. Steve commended Megan for being flexible. January's meeting will be "The Nature of Nature Reach" and will include an open house after the program.

Publicity: E-mails and posters seemed to be the only appearances this month.

Refreshments: Elma Hurt.

Newsletter: Wayne will summarize his annual report in the next issue.

Field Trip: Christmas Bird Count on January 1.

Birdseed Sale: Bob has arranged for the free use of a trailer. Luci Bednekoff donated \$100 to either a truck rental or the sale.

Rail Fence at Sperry-Galligar Property: Since three board members were not present tonight, we decided to postpone the discussion. Steve gave some background on the property and its donation to PSU.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55.

Financial Statement Liz Mangile, Treasurer December 2015

Beginning balance	\$4334.73
Credits	
Local Dues	\$ 90.00
Bird Seed Sale	2796.50
Yearly Credit—Nat. Audubon	447.75
Debits	
Newsletter	\$ 5.30
Cash Box	100.00
Stamps	68.60
Bird Seed Sale	1476.50
KS State Sales Tax	214.97
Ending balance	\$5803.61

Elma Hurt and Katrina, Chelsea, & Charlotte
Thanks for the refreshments at the
December meeting.

December Meeting Presenter: Murray Balk



The corner of Southeast Kansas is full of holes. Most of us already know that, but we probably didn't realize what happens to them until we listened to our speaker, Murray Balk, head of the Surface Mining Section of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Murray's presentation

was entitled, "Coal Mining and the Environment: Environmental and Regulatory Aspects of Coal Mining and Abandoned Mined Land Reclamation", which perhaps answered some questions we had on what happened after coal, lead, and zinc mines were abandoned in Crawford Counties in the first 60-70 years of the twentieth century.

In 1969, Kansas was one of the first states to pass requirements for reclaiming mined land; then, in 1979, federal regulations were enacted. Land used for mining had to meet standards of pre-mine quality, and topsoil was replaced and monitored for three years.

As part of the department's Abandoned Mined Land Program, "high wall hazards"—deep drop-offs along county roads—have been addressed by leveling the edges so that any car driving off the road will not fall via a high bluff into the strip pits. Exact amount of water areas must be maintained, so oftentimes wetland areas are created to compensate for strip pit edges being filled in.

Murray illustrated these processes by describing the projects around Foxtown, the "Quail Farm" on 20th Street, and the Deer Creek area. Toxic areas were treated with lime, and the projects involved huge earth-and-rock-moving activities that we sometimes don't realize are happening in this area.

The department has also been involved in replanting reclaimed area with prairie seed mixes; this spring, milkweed seed was added to help lessen the monarch butterfly habitat decline.

Sudden sinkholes can occur at any time and place, and the department treats these as emergencies and swings into "vertical opening abatement programs." An extreme example of a sudden sinkhole was just off Galena's Main Street, which literally swallowed the Green Parrot Bar.

Murray bowed to our Audubon interests by interspersing "Name That Bird" photos throughout his presentation and challenging us to identify them. He also talked about activities to protect endangered bat species (gray and long-eared), which include timing projects to avoid breeding seasons, and by planting trees around replaced water areas. By preserving our local bat species, the department may be able to assist in repopulating species in the eastern U. S., which are severely declining due to white nose syndrome.

Murray was justifiably proud of the fact that his department has accomplished 12 million dollars' worth of reclamation and abatements in the last few years. He left us with a wise admonishment to "Watch Where You Drive in SEK."



Sperry-Galligar Audubon Happenings

Antics of Armadillos



Our Christmas Bird Count party got sidetracked when we spotted a nine-banded armadillo rooting around in the snow patches of the underbrush by the road. Where I grew up we have no armadillos, so I'm fascinated by the strange creatures. I see legions of armadillo road kill victims, and have seen some at night, but not in the middle of the day so we watched for a while. When a car came by from the other direction it jumped a little, but other than that it just looked for insects, seemingly oblivious to the bevy of bobwhite quail that happened by.

A little internet research confirmed that in the winter armadillos may be active only during the day. They crossed the Rio Grande from Mexico into Texas in the 1880's and have been moving north and east ever since. They are now encountered as far north as Omaha and National Geographic predicts that they will eventually make it east to Washington, DC, and New Jersey. They are annual reproducers, with one fertilized egg dividing to produce four identical quadruplets. This reproductive strategy is

called polyembryony, and armadillos are the only mammals known to employ it. It means a female armadillo might give birth to over 50 offspring in her 12-15 year lifespan, so look out, New Jersey, they are coming!

I had heard that armadillos carry leprosy, so I googled that. About 150 Americans get leprosy each year, mostly while abroad. A 2012 US Health and Human Services study found that of Louisiana leprosy patients who had not been abroad, half carried strains of the bacteria that were genetically similar to the strains carried by armadillos, and that those strains were different from the strains acquired abroad. About half of those patients stated that they had had contact with armadillos, some hunting and eating them. Results suggest that it is theoretically possible for humans to get leprosy from armadillos and although the CDC rates the risk of transmission as low, they urge people to avoid contact to minimize the risk. At the same time, leprosy vaccines are being tested on armadillos, so they might someday be able to take partial credit for the eradication of the disease.

It turns out armadillos are unique not only in their appearance, but in their biology, and their similarity to humans makes them important for research. I just need to remember that the next time I get annoyed about them digging up my yard.

Megan Corrigan

BIRD SEED SALE SUCCESS

The SGAS Annual Birdseed Sale on December 5, 2015 was another success. The weather was warm on the sale day and folks tend to buy more birdseed when the weather is cold and snowy! But in spite of what appeared to be a slow day we still matched last years profits and a bit more. The donation of the trailer by Blue Ribbon Farm & Home and the sale of donated items at the booth really helped. I'm so pleased with the support of our members in all aspects of this event, i.e., donating sale items, volunteering to help at the booth and at the trailer and their purchase of birdseed. Thank you once again for your support.

Bob Mangile



SPERRY-GALLIGAR DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Since tonight's original program was cancelled due to a family death, Megan will reschedule the cassowary program, perhaps for the May picnic. Our next meeting is January 28, and Della Lister will give a presentation/open house on Nature Reach. The Christmas Bird Count will be on January 1; meet at the Express Lane in Scammon at 7 a.m. All are welcome. The annual bird seed sale is this Saturday. Bob Mangile arranged for the free loan of a trailer for the outside sale. We still need some afternoon volunteers—the signup sheet is going around again. Barb Robins

Sightings.....

Elusive Birds
Of
Winter

Loggerhead shrike



Brown creeper



Hermit thrush

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

**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
816 E. Atkinson Ave
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762-0205

Please Print



Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

e-mail address _____

**Events &
Miscellany**



**Rufous Hummingbird Sighting —
Again This Year**

The adult male rufous hummingbird is still in Jackson. (Cape Girardeau, MO county). He did not seem to mind all the rain and could be seen fluffing and preening frequently. He was even rubbing against branches. Thankfully, our location is high and dry and unaffected by the recent flooding in our area.

Since it has turned cold at night, I put thermostatically controlled heat tape on one of the feeders. It does a good job of keeping it thawed.

This is the same bird that wintered here last year (confirmed by the band). Last year he came on the day after Thanksgiving and left on Jan. 19th. He came in late October this year. It's let you know how long he stays this year.

***Jane Nicholas to Bob Mangie*

Check out a limited time offer for a free app on identification of birds from Cornell Laboratory. Check on the details by shopping itunes.com.
Delia Lister

News arrived that Elsie Vail, (97 years old) long time active member of the Southeast Kansas Audubon Chapter in Parsons, passed away. Some members of our chapter knew her quite well before Sperry-Galligar Chapter was established in southeast Kansas. For years she drove to central Kansas for meetings with the Kansas Audubon Council. At 93 she thought that she should limit her drives to the state meetings, but still kept informed of state Audubon discussions. Talk about a life-long learner!

**Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society
Newsletter**
816 Atkinson Ave.
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.)
7:00 pm to 9 pm, in Room 102, Yates Hall.
PSU Campus, Pittsburg, KS.
Refreshments served. 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.



BONUS PAGE

SEK Mined Land Christmas Bird Count—Steve Ford, Compiler

As many of you know, the National Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count is the oldest "citizen science" endeavor in the country – 116 years-old this season. The local Southeast Kansas Mined Land Count is 26 years old, officially beginning on December 30, 1989. It's older than the Sperry-Galligar chapter, which now sponsors it. Cindy and I were on that first count (we were only ten years old), along with that stalwart Joplin birder and bluebird expert, Larry Herbert. I've been stapling the participant rosters together for the last 20 years, starting in 1996. Larry is on that 1996 list as well, and it also includes other dedicated graybeards such as Bob and Liz Mangile and Mavis and Ray Benner. All of these folks were in the field again last New Year's Day counting birds. The total participant count was 13, including four from the Joplin area. Many thanks to them all.

Why get up early every New Year's Day (for us) to do this stuff, year after year, and occasionally in some rough winter weather? Aside from the scientific value of very long-term data-gathering by many thousands of observers over all of North America, it continues to be interesting on a local level to find what's out there (birds are easy to see in midwinter), it keeps our birding skills sharp, and it reaffirms that even in nature's quiet time bird life is still vibrant. True, the overall results are often pretty similar year-to-year – for example, the most commonly seen sparrow every year is the white-crowned – yet, every year there are surprises. This year the most common sparrow was NOT the white-crown, but the savannah, which was not reported at all last year. Why the difference? I don't know. Maybe happenstance; maybe there's an ecological reason; maybe the all observers were looking left last year, and the birds were right!

These anomalies are one reason people go looking. This year the group saw 60 species, versus 57 last year. Pretty

similar – as was the weather, which can be a major variable. The observation effort was a bit stronger this year – 13 participants (28.5 hours and 164 miles) versus last year's 8 participants (19.5 hours, 117 miles). Some other interesting differences were these: No killdeer this year (12 last year); only 3 grebes this year (12 last year); no cedar waxwings this year (124 last year). The thing about waxwings is that if you see one, you're going to see dozens. Only two of the four groups last year saw any, but the groups that did see them saw bunches. I found some woodpecker numbers noteworthy: this year we saw about half as many red-bellies as last year (35/65), but twice as many flickers (55/25).

Any substance to these differences? Any real trends? Probably not in most cases, but if enough people see similar numbers over time, differences might be real, and the reasons for them can be assessed.

This year our group's (Cindy, Delia, and me) "best bird" was a spectacular look at a lens-filling, sun-drenched pileated woodpecker that was violently hammering away at an innocent green ash tree, making the splinters fly. On the other side of the size spectrum for woodland birds was a little brown creeper. We saw the only one seen by any group this year and last. Always fun to snag these out of a dense woods. Least I be accused of bragging, our group was the only one to fail to record bald eagles, but we did find what we think is an eagle's nest near the Neosho River. We want to revisit it in the spring. Yet another nice sight was that of a covey of bobwhites picking their way through an open woods like barnyard chickens. Often we don't see any quail at all, so this was fun.

The numbers are sent to both the National Audubon Society for publication in *American Birds*, and to the Kansas Ornithological Society for publication in their *Bulletin*. Thanks to Delia Lister for her computer help toward this end.

Temp. 23-40 F; little wind, 0-5; lakes and streams mostly frozen, but open late in the day; no snow cover. Sunny all day. Thirteen observers in 5 parties. 7:45 am – 4:00 pm. Total party hours by car: 26.5; by foot: 2.0. Distance by car: 162.75; by foot: 1.25. Total species: 60. Individuals: 6,291. Observers: Mavis Benner, Ray Benner, Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Cindy Ford, Steve Ford (compiler), Collins Haynes, Joyce Haynes, Lawrence Herbert, Delia Lister, Elizabeth Mangile, Robert Mangile, Billie Mullins

160 Canada goose
4 Wood duck
149 Mallard
6 Northern shoveler
15 Duck sp.
18 Northern bobwhite
74 Wild turkey
3 Pied-billed grebe
4 Great blue heron
8 Northern harrier
1 Cooper's hawk
5 Bald eagle
1 Red-shouldered hawk
51 Red-tailed hawk
1 Hairy's red-tailed hawk
36 Rock pigeon (feral pigeon)
1 Eurasian collared dove
132 Mourning dove
1 Great horned owl
1 Barred owl
18 Red-headed woodpecker

35 Red-bellied woodpecker
2 Yellow-bellied sapsucker
15 Downy woodpecker
1 Hairy woodpecker
55 Northern flicker
5 Pileated woodpecker
28 American kestrel
4 Loggerhead shrike
134 Blue jay
92 American crow
86 Horned lark
45 Carolina Chickadee
41 Tufted titmouse
8 White-breasted nuthatch
1 Brown creeper
7 Carolina wren
1 Ruby-crowned kinglet
47 Eastern bluebird
14 American robin
26 Northern mockingbird
373 European starling

1 Yellow-rumped warbler
14 Tree sparrow
36 Field sparrow
137 Dark-eyed junco
153 White-crowned sparrow
63 Harris's sparrow
15 White-throated sparrow
167 Savannah sparrow
50 Song sparrow
1 Lincoln's sparrow
14 Swamp sparrow
147 Northern cardinal
1,862 Red-winged blackbird
659 Eastern meadowlark
50 Common grackle
15 Brown-headed cowbird
1,120 Blackbird sp.
4 House finch
25 American goldfinch
40 House sparrow