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News From the Flock, Vol. 2016 Issue 8

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

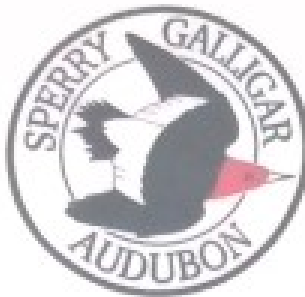
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NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry- Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2015 - 2017

President:

Wayne Bockelman

Vice President:

Megan Corrigan

Secretary

Barb Robins

Treasurer

Liz Mangile

Newsletter Editor

Cindy Ford

cford@gus.pittstate.edu

Dec 2016

VOLUME 2017 ISSUE 1

VACATION FEAST OF BIRDS

Article & Photos by Cindy Ford

We planned a small get-away to see another part of the country. Why not try the Galveston, TX area? Steve and I knew the Gulf beach would be a change of scene and there surely should be something to do in the area since it is a tourist area. We reserved the second week of November for this adventure, knowing that the weather could be cold and/or blustery. Well, we were pleasantly surprised...

The weather was beautiful all week with sun and mild temperatures. We could not have asked for better. And, there were some attractions, but we were absolutely drawn to the rich diversity of birds on the island. We spent every day finding new sites and new species. It truly was a naturalist's holiday.



Development on Galveston Island is pervasive with hotels and stilted houses crowded onto beach dunes, in drained salt marshes, and along the

bays. This time of year many of the beach houses were unoccupied, but still influencing the natural-ness of the island. We heard stories of hurricanes devastating this area, but development is undeterred. Despite the resorts, beach houses, and hotels, we were pleased to find birds nearly everywhere. As it turns out, long-billed curlews were seen every day on the lawns of the place we were staying. If you have not heard great-tailed grackles with their "cash register" call, you have missed some unbelievable sound.



Long-billed curlew

We were fortunate to be staying about a mile from Galveston Island State Park, so venturing there the first day out was



White ibis

such a treat. The expanse of salt marsh was a paradise for many wading birds, including roseate spoonbills, great egrets, snowy egrets, white ibis, great blue herons, tri-colored herons, and clapper rails. We were thrilled to see white-tailed kites, ospreys, and crested caracaras. We explored the north and south ends of the island, finding species we have not seen for years, including black-necked stilts, reddish egret, brown pelicans, white pelicans, willets, plovers, sandpipers, and several species of gulls.

A ferry ride to Bolivar Peninsula to the North was well worth the trip with the addition of species: American oystercatchers, ruddy turnstones, American avocets, black skimmers, red-breasted mergansers, and two species of cormorants. Though a bit of a drive from Galveston, we were absorbed in viewing birds in a freshwater marsh at the Anahuac Wildlife Refuge. We saw thousands of birds, some of which were completely new to us. There were common moorhens mixed in with American coots. Rafts of ducks, including black-bellied whistling ducks, black and mottled ducks, gadwalls, blue-wing teal, American wigeons, and northern shovelers, were seen among numerous wading birds.



If you travel to Galveston, even for a short stay, be sure to take your binoculars!

December Meeting
Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Yates 102
Pittsburg State Univ
Presentation

Dec 1 — "Morel Mysteries Solved" by Jason Mander-scheid, PSU Greenhouse Manager. If you have lived very long in the Midwest, you are aware of the interest in finding and eating morel mushrooms. Jason is a passionate morel collector and sculptor who will talk about this fascinating fungus.

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

Board Meeting Highlights

Barb Robins, Secretary

Attending: Mavis Benner, Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Cindy & Steve Ford, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Barb Robins, Emmett & Ruth Sullivan.

Call To Order (Wayne): 6:00 p.m.

Minutes for 9-29-16: Read and approved.

Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance of \$5,512.16.

Tonight's Meeting: "Finding Saw-whet Owls in Arkansas" by Mitchell Pruitt from U of Arkansas.

Next Month's Meeting: The mushroom man is being elusive, but Meagan is hoping he will respond and give us a program on morels.

Publicity: On KRPS, in the form of an announcement. A new person is in charge of the calendar, Michael Caughron, mcaughron@pittstate.edu. Posters are on PSU campus and in PPL, and a brief announcement was in the Morning Sun.

Wayne has unearthed the fact that delivering a printed announcement to their office a week before the event is the most effective.

Newsletter: Cindy has produced another five-pager, and the photos contributed by members added a lot. Everyone enjoyed Donna Maus's article about her students.

Refreshments: People are still signing up, and the sheet will be passed around again.

Field Trips: Prairie Jubilee happened on a beautiful day. No upcoming forays are scheduled.

Dues are still due: 19 paid in September. Diane reported successfully to the national office using its new system.

Facebook: Mavis has launched it; she's ready to people to post on the page.

Curtains for Lab at Natural History Reserve: Delia will make a request at the general meeting tonight.

Fishing Line Disposal System for College Lake: Delia showed us a photo of a PVC-based container and sign unit.

She will have 3 made and installed by the PSU grounds crew.

Bird Seed Sale is Dec. 3; Bob is still trying to contact Dane at Blue Ribbon to see if we have the truck again.

Donation to Speaker's Project: It was moved, seconded, and approved to give Mitchell \$100 to aid his research.

Financial Statement

Liz Mangile, Treasurer

November—December 2016

Beginning balance-----\$5489.30

Credit

Local memberships-----\$ 75.00

Total-----\$ 75.00

Debit

Newsletter-----\$ 7.14

Speaker-----\$ 100.00

Total-----\$ 107.14

Ending balance-----\$5457.16

October Meeting Presenter: Mitchell Pruitt



Photo by Bob Mangile

It's difficult to imagine an owl smaller than the Eastern Screech Owl, but Mitchell Pruitt informed us that one bests it by two centimeters: the Northern Saw-whet Owl. Mitchell, a graduate student in conservation biology at the University of Arkansas, has chosen this tiny elusive owl as his master's research project. This has proven to be a daunting task since Arkansas is on the edge of its breeding range, and there are only 12 state records for that state. (There are 15 for Kansas.) Mitchell will attempt to record additional occurrences in northwest Arkansas and, hopefully, add to knowledge about the Saw-whet and its migration patterns and breeding range.

Since the owls are almost impossible to spot by birders in our area, Mitchell filled us in on some Saw-whet facts. The bird is one of five in its genus and is closely related to the burrowing owl. It feeds on small mammals, primarily voles and mice, and prefers woodland and riparian areas, especially cedar thickets and other dense habitats. Its breeding range is in northern, mountainous North America and winters irregularly through the central and northeastern United States.

Irruptions (upsurges in migration numbers) seem to occur every four years, and 2016 is a year in that cycle. Although the owl is seldom seen, it is not endangered and as rare as we think, but much is unknown about it.

Mitchell's research is geared toward making more about the Saw-whets known, and his method consists of setting up mist nets to capture them, calling them with recorded vocalizations, banding them, sexing them (solely determined by weight), and ageing them by using a black light on the feathers.

After two years of work, he has captured 24 with 10 vocalization records. Nationwide, 150,000 have been banded. In the future, he would like to move beyond banding and attempt to discover from what region the birds come, and if they are truly wintering in Arkansas. Anyone wishing to keep up with his research activities can receive a newsletter by e-mailing him at mipruitt24@yahoo.com or by reading his Facebook page.

We might win lottery prizes before adding a Northern Saw-whet Owl to our life lists, so we are grateful that Mitchell showed us great photos and gave us much information on a secretive and little-known bird.

Barb Robins



Thanks to Walt DeGruisen and Donna Maus for the refreshments. All enjoyed them.

SPERRY-GALLIGAR Audubon Happenings

MONARCH MADNESS*Megan Corrigan*

Kansas is lucky when it comes to monarch butterflies. First of all, we have Monarch Watch, a research program out of KU that tags and monitors the monarch populations both in the US and in Mexico. Second of all, we had a surprising abundance of late season monarchs this year. It's not just me saying this. Monarch Watch posted on their blog that Kansas, Missouri and North Carolina all reported a surprising surge in late season monarchs this year. In fact, they say we had more monarch butterfly larvae eating our milkweed late in the summer than anywhere in the north reported all season.

I have some common milkweed plants in my yard that just this year grew into a decent sized stand. I've also got some nectar plants that bloom so I spent all spring and summer looking for monarchs, waiting for them to flock to our yard. I saw just a few now and then. But then in August, they were there every day, three and four at a time. I even found a green cocoon and brought it in the house. If you have never seen a monarch cocoon, they are amazing. They look like they



have melted dots of gold on them. I wasn't even sure it was a monarch chrysalis, it seemed too small. But since monarchs had been flying around, it made sense it could be. I propped it in a jar and decided I'd watch it for however long it took for it to grow into a butterfly. Well, it didn't take long. The next morning when I got up there was a butterfly in the jar and it was definitely a monarch. I'm hoping it's now on its way down to Mexico.

There were some folks at an information table with monarchs in all stages at Prairie Jubilee. They had tiny caterpillars, large caterpillars, and green chrysalises. They had butterflies that had hatched that day and they were tagging them a giving them to kids to hold and release. The kids loved it and the parents loved taking photos, though butterflies are hard to get good photos of. They always close their wings back just at the wrong moment.

If you are interested in finding out more about monarchs, take a look at <http://monarchwatch.org/>. They have a map that tracks the northern migration every spring, and all the information you could need about how to attract monarchs to your garden. We're so lucky to have such a resource in our state!

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Meeting Highlights

Bird Sightings: Pelicans at Greenbush and Frontenac lagoon, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Dark-eyed juncos, Sandhill Crane at Prairie State Park, a pair of Bald Eagles at Bone Creek Lake.

Refreshments were provided by Walt DeGruson and Donna Maus. The signup sheet for future refreshments was again circulated. Dues are still due. Mavis Benner's Audubon Facebook page was unveiled. The Collegio gave us a full-page spread with photos. Delia Lister issued a plea for help with making curtains for the Natural History Reserve lab. See her after the meeting if you want to help. Our birdseed sale is December 3; a signup sheet for volunteers was passed around. Two owl door prizes in keeping with tonight's theme were awarded to Angie Mullins and Whit Dungan. Cade Simmons (l) and Luke Orender (rt) (Colgan H.S.) showing owl.

**SWIFT ACCOUNT**

Bob Mangile spotted this little bit of interesting bird behavior information:

"When a common swift kicks off from its breeding grounds north of the equator to return to more temperate climes, it

likely won't touch earth until the following year.

Swifts, with their darting movements and high-energy hunting habits seem to be poor candidates for the title of world's longest flyer. But according to a new study by researchers from Sweden's Lund University, the small birds take

the record easily, with some staying aloft for up to 10 months at a time."

This was taken from a Discover Magazine on-line article this link <http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/d-brief/2016/10/27/swifts-fly-for-10-months/#.WBQL-ITSPgw>

Sightings.....**The Likenesses of Herons**

Great blue heron



Little blue heron



Tricolored heron

Send your newsletter articles, bird sightings, and nature notes to C. Ford by Jan. 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**

Please Print



Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

e-mail address _____

**Events &
Miscellany**



BIRD SEED SALE

The Annual Sperry-Galligar Audubon Birdseed Sale will be held Sunday, December 3 at the Pittsburg Meadowbrook Mall on Centennial Ave. The truck with bags of seed will be on the west parking area; a crafts/food booth will be inside the north entrance. *Many thanks to Blue Ribbon for donation of the trailer.* If you would like to volunteer to help, please stop by. The seed prices are about the best you can do this year, so stock up for the winter season.

**Mined Land
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

NOTE: The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be on Saturday, December 31 this year (instead of New Year's Day), since the Scammon Express Lane Mini-Mart is closed on Sundays.

ALSO NOTE: Highway 7 to Scammon is closed due to construction. Consult a map to find an alternate route to the west end of Scammon. Meet at the Mini-Mart a little after 7:00 a.m. to start the count.

RENEW YOUR DUES

August 31st. is the annual expiration date for LOCAL Sperry-Galligar Audubon members. For those receiving the hard copy Newsletters please check your mailing label for your expiration date. Our records indicate that Local dues for ALL of those receiving the E-Newsletter expired on August 31, 2016. National Audubon dues are renewable through their mailers. Local dues can be paid at the September 29th. meeting or mailed in.

**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.