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11-2021

### News From the Flock, Vol. 2021 Issue 3

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

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# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

Nov/Dec 2021/ Issue 3

## OFFICERS

President  
Steve Ford  
Vice President  
Mary Jo Meier  
Secretary  
Megan Corrigan  
Treasurer  
Liz Mangile

## Board Support

Newsletter Editor  
Cindy Ford  
[cford@gus.pittstate.edu](mailto:cford@gus.pittstate.edu)

Web Master  
Bob Mangile  
[sperry-galligar.com](http://sperry-galligar.com)

Membership  
Dianne McCallum

## Next Program

**Thursday,  
December 2**  
102 Yates Hall,  
Pittsburg State  
University  
7:00 p.m.  
Mask required

"20 Years of  
Differing  
Environmental  
Experience Now  
Working Together  
to Defend Wildlife  
in Kansas" by  
Jackie Augustine,  
Audubon of  
Kansas

Please join us for the next Sperry-Galligar Audubon meeting. There is a great program planned and many more to come.

## BIRD SEED SALE!

**Blue Ribbon Farm Store,  
4th and Rouse, Pittsburg**

**Friday, Dec 3, 7:30 – 5:30  
Saturday, Dec 4, 7:30 – 1:00**

The Blue Ribbon Farm Store managers, Dane and Linda Schultz, are providing black oil sunflower seed, wild bird seed, and niger (thistle) during a special sales event. Fifteen percent of the proceeds from these sales will go to the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Chapter. We will not be in Meadowbrook Mall this year.

**Please take this opportunity to support your  
Audubon Chapter and Blue Ribbon Farm Store.**

## Join the Audubon Christmas Bird Count

**New Year's Day -- 7:00 a.m.**

*Meet at McCune Farm to Market at 7:00 to pick up your map and packet. Andy George wants to encourage all to let him know you want to attend...[adgeorge@pittstate.edu](mailto:adgeorge@pittstate.edu) or 573-777-0652*



## Board Minutes

The Sperry-Galligar Audubon Board Meeting was held October 28, 2021. In attendance were Bob and Liz Mangile, Mavis Benner, Mary Jo Meier, Steve and Cindy Ford, Dianne McCallum, Wayne Bockelman, and Megan Corrigan

Minutes - Minutes of the last meeting were read by Megan and approved.

Treasurer's Report – We have \$4,894.39 in the checking account.

Membership – Our membership stands at about 40 people, and it is renewal season for the 2021-22 year.

Bluebird boxes – These will be assembled after Thanksgiving, and available for sale from SG Audubon members.

Birdseed Sale – Will be held at Blue Ribbon Friday Dec. 3 and Saturday Dec. 4 (the store closes at noon on Saturday). A percentage of all birdseed sales will be donated to SG Audubon.

Audubon of Kansas – SG Audubon could propose a project and apply for funding. Initial discussions are underway.

Kansas Herpetological Society Conference – SGAS will contribute \$300 to the KHS annual conference.

Future Meetings – December 2 Jackie Augustine, the Executive Director of Audubon of Kansas will speak. We will resume offering refreshments. They are not allowed in the classroom, but we will have them in the hallway after the meeting.

## Treasurer Report

### NOVEMBER

Beginning balance-----\$ 4901.27

Credits

Memberships-----\$ 45.01

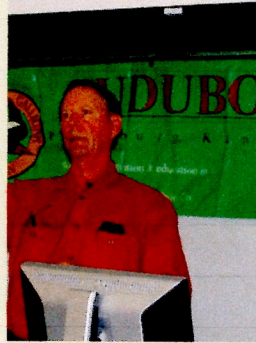
Debits

Newsletter-----\$ 6.88

Kansas Herpetological Society---\$300.00

Ending balance-----\$ 4639.39

## Past Audubon Meeting Program



### Honeybees and Rattlesnakes

Norbert Neal

Ten years ago Norbert and his wife, Cathy, retired to southeast Kansas. They had lived in western Kansas, and knew they wanted to

retire somewhere with more

topography and rain. They chose a spot in Chautauqua County. Norbert shared a video of five hummingbird feeders near their house surrounded by 75-100 ruby-throated hummingbirds. The hummingbirds love his area because there are a lot of scrub oaks that support small insects they need.

Norbert's entry into beekeeping was also facilitated by a bird. A painted bunting was a daily visitor to his yard. One day while looking for it at its usual time, he noticed something hanging in a nearby tree. It was a swarm of honeybees! A friend told him they tend not to sting when they are in a swarm so he cut the branch off and put it in a box. They stayed in the box and built honeycomb helter-skelter. When he opened it, it was a mess.

He learned that bees need to be in a box with sheets of wax or plastic foundation so they will produce honey in a way that can be harvested. He learned how to rear queen bees. He showed us frames with foundation and one with honey. Apparently, when Norbert takes up a hobby, he doesn't fool around, because by 2014 Norbert was entering his honey at the American Beekeeping Federation's American Honey Show and won first prize three years in a row. A wonderful retirement hobby!

But, when you buy land, "the seller doesn't always tell you everything," Norbert said. He bought some land in the 90's near Independence planning to build a house. He dug the basement and built a rock retaining wall to have some space between the porch and the retaining wall to have bird feeders and watch the birds. Bird

(cont. on next page)





# Happenings in Southeast KS

## Birds & Rattlesnakes (cont.)

feeders attracted mice to the fallen seeds. And mice attracted... timber rattlesnakes! The rocks used for the retaining wall heat up in the sun but have shade underneath so gravid rattlesnakes use the retaining wall rocks all summer as gestation rocks to thermoregulate while they incubate eggs internally in preparation for giving birth to live young.

Since timber rattlesnakes are protected, Norbert has learned to live with them. He gave his dogs rattlesnake aversion training and they alert Norbert by barking when rattlesnakes are around. Norbert and Catherine have been in touch with scientists who are very interested in their rattlesnake population, and they collect data and journal about their snakes. A herpetologist told them not to worry too much about the baby snakes, because they will follow the

mom after they are born, but Catherine watched the 60 or so babies "dripping off the rocks like little icicles" head off all in different directions, not following mom. Scientists are learning more about timber rattlers thanks to Norbert's willingness to live near them and observe and document them.

Norbert seems to like observing the snakes. He shared a video he took of two males wrestling for dominance, something most people and scientists never get to see. They fought for two hours, wrestling, but never biting each other. Norbert says he doesn't worry much, because timber rattlesnakes are much more docile than the prairie rattlesnakes in western Kansas. Let's hope he continues to be right about that!

**Megan Corrigan**

## Handmade Bluebird Boxes for Sale

Bob Mangile modified the design of our latest bluebird nesting boxes. The result is a handsome bluebird box for you to hang in your yard or outlying property. More boxes need to be made. Stay tuned if you want to help.

The boxes will sell for \$15.00.

**Some new bluebird boxes will be available at the next meeting.**



## Sightings...



### Eastern Bluebirds Down in Numbers



Bob Mangile keeps annual records for local bluebird box monitors.

Last year: 384 fledglings  
This year: 81 fledglings  
10 reported no bluebirds this year.

Was the decline due to the early spring 2021 freeze?

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

[cford@gus.pittstate.edu](mailto:cford@gus.pittstate.edu)



## ALL ABOUT WORMS

Bob Mangile

As kids we only made the distinctions between the “garden worms” and the large, tough “sod worms” used for fish bait and the smaller red worms found in manure piles that we called “manure worms” that were not good fish bait. Grousing around on the Internet I found many interesting things about earth worms.

There are 6,000 species of earthworms in the world ranging in length from half an inch to nearly 10 feet long. About 180 species are found in the US and Canada and 60 of those are considered invasive species. The garden worms live from one to two years but can live longer.

Earthworms do not have eyes; however, they do have specialized photosensitive cells called "light cells of Hess" that allows them to detect dark or light. They do not have ears but can sense vibrations. They breathe through their mucous- coated skin that must be kept moist. (Though they must crawl onto sidewalks during heavy rains to avoid drowning. If unable to get back to the soil they eventually dry out and die.)

They have five heart-like structures called aortic arches that squeeze/pump blood through their system. They are hermaphrodites, carrying both male and female sex organs, but must pair with another worm to reproduce. They mate by aligning themselves in opposite directions at their gonadal openings and exchanging packets of sperm. Each will form a tiny, golden brown, egg capsule in the clitellum that is passed into the soil that will produce a few babies in about a month or two.

Not having teeth, grass and leaves are taken into the mouth, coated with saliva and pushed into the crop and then into the gizzard where it is ground apart and moved into the intestines. Some food is passed into the blood stream for immediate use and the rest passes out of the anus as castings (worm poop) which is a very valuable type of fertilizer and sold commercially. Earthworms are like free farm help! Worms help to increase the amount of air and water that gets into the soil. Their burrowing loosens and aerates the soil and improves soil drainage. Groups of bristles on each body segment that move in and out grip surfaces as they stretch – contracting muscles to move them forward or backwards.

If split in two it will not become two new worms. The head end may survive and regenerate a new tail if separated behind the clitellum (a swollen dark band near the anterior end) but tail end will not grow a new head and will die. # # #





## BOOK REVIEW: *Unflappable*

Unflappable by Suzie Gilbert is an adventure novel about a zookeeper named Luna who has to smuggle a stolen unreleasable bald eagle to an eagle sanctuary in Ontario, hopefully along with its mate. The book is about as believable as a James Bond film, with all the requisite pursuit scenes, fancy cars, caviar, diamonds, romance and narrow escapes. But the main characters are wildlife rehabilitators, and the book conveys, through the rehabbers, some important conservation messages. We meet Florida panthers that have been hit by cars, songbirds with bandaged wings from window collisions, bats with white-nose syndrome, and a turtle with a cracked shell but intact internal organs being glued back together with medical glue. We share the joy of a successful release and the sorrow of losing an animal. The author, Suzie Gilbert is, herself, a wildlife rehabilitator.

Chasing Luna, intending to put the eagles back in a federally licensed facility, is a sympathetic and pensive federal wildlife officer. He cannot promise that, once recovered, the bonded pair would be kept together. This makes him one of the bad guys, even though he is also on the side of conservation. He contemplates the contrast between the dedication of the rehabbers to saving individual animals and the federal policies that operate in the best interest of populations of animals. While the federal agent wants everything done by the letter of the law, rehabbers deal on a daily basis with exceptions, emergencies, judgement calls and bent rules.

From the first page, you can tell this book will have a happy ending, you just can't see quite how that could be possible. The twists and turns are entertaining, the details about wildlife rehabilitation are fascinating, and the rehabbers we meet along the way are inspirational. This book could have benefitted from an editor. There are several typos, and one rehabber talks about 'poisonous snakes', instead of venomous snakes. Some of the situations are simply too implausible even with a healthy suspension of disbelief. However, for suspense, adventure, and some feel-good wildlife stories, Unflappable is fun.

Suzie Gilbert emailed Sperry Galligar Audubon with a request that we mention Unflappable in our newsletter, since it had been reviewed by Audubon Magazine. **Megan Corrigan**

Emmett Sullivan sent this photo of wild sweet William or blue phlox. Look for this flower in April.





## Audubon of Kansas Zoom Meeting

Steve Ford

For several months of Kansas' new Executive Director, Dr. Jackie Augustine, has been coordinating monthly Zoom meetings with the Audubon chapters. Mary Jo, Cindy, and I usually take part. The most recent meeting featured a report by Dr. Alice Boyle, a K-State bird researcher who is participating in a nationwide migratory bird project. The project, called MOTUS, establishes towers that receive signals of radio-tagged birds. The technology makes it possible to fine-tune our knowledge of migratory patterns. Such knowledge is important for conservation decisions. A tower costs about \$10,000 and each tiny transmitter runs north of \$200. A transmitter lasts about a year. Dr. Boyle is seeking funding.

There was also a report of the KAW Valley Eagles Day Festival coordinated by the Jay Hawk Audubon Chapter. Since 1998 the festival has been held in a diversity of locations, most recently at Riverfront Mall in Lawrence. Trips to Clinton Reservoir and Perry Lake are featured plus a wide range of speakers and performers.

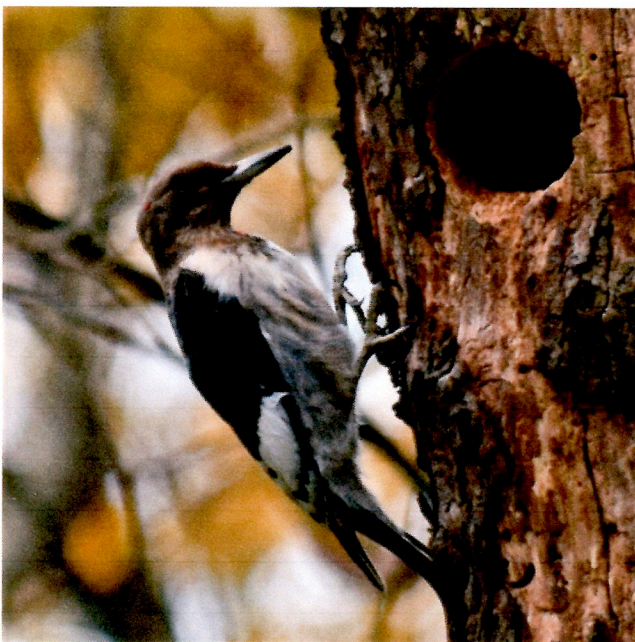
Future Zoom meetings will focus on recruiting active members.

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### UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS

Kathy Fox spotted an immature red-headed woodpecker. (Look at the spot of red changing on the head.)

David Mangile saw a turkey vulture with a white primary feather (on wing of left bird).





**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 renewal membership, send \$15.00 for membership in 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.

**Please print and mail to:**

**Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society  
816 E. Atkinson Ave.  
Pittsburg, KS 66762**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Sperry-Galligar Audubon  
Society**

Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month...7:00 p.m. to 9 p.m., Room 102, Yates Hall, PSU Campus, Pittsburg, KS.

No meetings in June, July, or August. (November/December meeting date to be announced.)

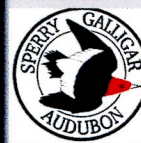
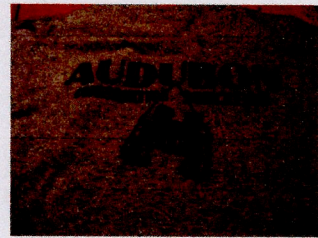
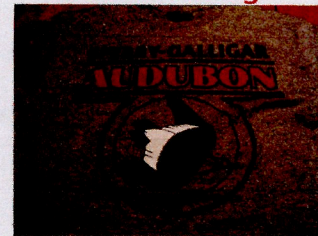
Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society  
816 E. Atkinson Ave.  
Pittsburg, KS 66762

**Events & Etc.**

**Bird Seed Sale**

Blue Ribbon Farm Store,  
Pittsburg  
December 3, 7:30 – 5:30  
December 4, 7:30 – 1:00

**T-shirts for Sale  
Next Meeting**



**Dues**

Please pay your membership dues.

**ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS.** Pay membership dues in September. Please consider paying local membership dues. Our chapter receives 100% of the local dues only. You can subscribe to both local and national. Either way you get the newsletter.