



# 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](mailto:cford@pittstate.edu)

November 2011

VOLUME 2011 ISSUE 8

## Why the Spectacular Fall Colors this Year?

by Jim Dawson, PSU Plant Physiologist



As we approached the end of summer I began to wonder what the fall foliage might look like. A hot and dry summer normally means little or perhaps no fall color. Indeed as I drove through southern Oklahoma most of the leaves were brown, even in August. Dead leaves can't display the pigments which lead to our spectacular fall foliage.

Locally we were lucky. We did get some rain and cooler weather—both important determinants for fall color. Toward the end of summer, chlorophyll synthesis wanes and eventually stops as the days get shorter and shorter. As chlorophyll concentrations in the leaves

decline we are treated to the colors of the pigments which have always been there but were covered by the green of the chlorophyll.

These brightly colored pigments are generally the carotenoids, originally extracted from carrots, and the anthocyanins. These are large families of pigments with many members which are widely distributed in the plant world. These two groups of pigment are yellow to orange to red in color and the colors we see in the fall leaves are quite variable depending on the concentration of the various members of each group. Often, certain pigments are characteristic of individual plant families, like reds in the red maples, yellows in the cottonwood.

These accessory pigments, as they are frequently called, are critical to photosynthesis. Some, such as the carotenoids, may pass absorbed light energy to chlorophyll and assist in the light capture phase of photosynthesis. Most of the pigments are strong antioxidants and serve to protect chlorophyll from excess light or oxygen; both can damage or destroy chlorophyll. Because of their antioxidant nature they are able to persist long after the chlorophyll is gone. Thus our great fall colors.

More recently we have realized the benefits of these antioxidant compounds, extracted them, and made them available, much as we have done with vitamins. Some are even used to treat diseases, such as macular degeneration. Fall colors are not only a treat for the eyes but can also assure our continued good health.

### Calendar of

### Meetings

Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

**Dec 1:** *Dog Agility is a Team Event* by Bethany Schifferdecker, Bone Creek 4-H Club, Girard, KS

**Jan 26:** Lifetime Naturalist, Chanda Williams, Joplin MO-- "Jewels in the Sky" a new program about butterfly identification, habitat, their caterpillars and the host plants they need for food source, planning a butterfly garden and tagging monarchs.

### Bird Seed Sale — Saturday, Dec. 3

Meadow Brook Mall, Pittsburg  
9:00—5:00

.....  
Donate baked goods or crafts to sell  
for Audubon

or

plan to help sell seed from the truck

or

help at the booth inside mall

### Area Christmas Bird Counts

Dec. 30 — Liberal, MO. Meet at Prairie State Park Visitor Center, 8:00 a.m., Lawrence Herbet (417) 622-2336

Dec. 31 — Joplin, MO. Meet at Wildcat Glade Nature Center, 8:00 a.m., Lawrence Herbet (417) 622-2336

Jan. 1 — Pittsburg, KS. Meet at Scammon Gas Station & Convenience Store on Hwy 7, 8:00 a.m., Steve Ford (620) 235-4745



## Board Meeting Highlights Barb Robins, Secretary

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

**Call To Order** (Meagan): 5:45 p.m.  
Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance is \$3,066.13.

**Programs** (Martha): Next will be Bethany Schifferdecker on dog agility.

**Bird Seed Sale**, Dec. 3 (Bob): Seed prices might decrease somewhat before then. Green Team Raptor Cage Build, Nov. 19 (**rescheduled for Dec. 10**) (Delia): She still needs volunteers to help build (from 8 am till dark) and to bring sides or desserts (at 10:30). Emmett and Steve will grill meat.

**Field Trips** (Carolyn & Charles): We will go to John Redmond and Melvern Reservoirs, and Lyon County Lake on Nov. 12.

**E-Newsletter** (Cindy): Should we take members off the paper mailing list if they receive the e-letter? Yes, unless they specify they want both.

Next meeting is December 1. Meeting adjourned at 6:15.

**BIRD SEED SALE — Dec. 3**

## Financial Statement Liz Mangile, Treasurer

### October, 2011

Beginning Balance----- \$3086.58

#### Credits

Local Dues 102.00

Total..... \$ 102.00

#### Debits

Newsletter \$ 20.45

Total----- \$ 20.45

Ending balance----- \$3168.13

## From my Nest Meagan Duffee, President



There have been three unusual suspects seen on campus recently. The trio was first spotted by Dr. Steve Ford and quickly their popularity grew among the Nature Reach staff. So who or what is this infamous trio? Three immature squirrels who seem to be gray squirrels with pure white tails! I say they seem to be gray squirrels as it is fairly uncommon to see gray squirrels here in Pittsburg. Their heads are the color of a fox squirrel, but the rest of their bodies are a beautiful light shade of gray and their tails are little white beacons in the brown grass.

They can be seen near the Overman Student Center, in a pair of oak trees. These trees are full of nests, so it's not hard to see why they want to stay. But the question here is: Are they gray squirrels or fox squirrels? It is possible for the two to breed, but what would produce the white tails? Genetics clearly plays a role, but it would be interesting to know if they are fox or gray squirrels. This question will plague me now until I am able to get an official identification from someone on what they are. It is obvious that they are all from the same litter. They look almost identical to one another.

The "phantom trio" is what I call them now and it is fun to watch them hide their acorns. It seems that fellow students do not notice their odd coloring, as they walk on by without giving a second glance. If you have time I highly recommend coming to campus and looking for the "Phantom Trio". Grab a camera



Carolyn Chips won the door prize—a pumpkin with a beautiful fall scene hand painted by Carol Newcomb.



## October Featured Speaker: Delia Lister

Delia took us on a virtual "Amazon Adventure", which was quite welcome on an evening before an autumn frost. She was in Northeast Peru in the Explorama lodges complex, hours north of Iquitos, at the end of the wet and beginning of the dry seasons. There can be a difference of 30 feet in the water level between the seasons, and we saw evidence of that in her photos.

Delia defined the term "tropical rainforest" and discussed the biodiversity of that area. Even though everyone expects to see multitudinous insects, reptiles, and mammals dashing about, she emphasized the defensive need of all species to be camouflaged or to imitate something else, making them practically invisible till one knew how and where to look. Thanks to her visit to a wildlife refuge, we were able to see colorful photos of interesting critters.

The canopy walkway, 125 feet off the ground, afforded an opportunity to see ecosystems that do not exist at ground level. It was not difficult to sway in one's seat while imagining the swaying of the nylon ropes.

We were given a fascinating cultural look at the Yagua Indians—their way of living and their artisan skills. Even though they lead a primitive life according to our standards, they are helped by tourism, state welfare, and community service projects.

She will be leading a trip back to the region on July 16-29, 2012; let her know if you want to share the adventure. Barb Robins, Sec.



**\*\*Critter Connections by Bob Mangile\*\***

About 20 years ago a pair of American Kestrels nested in a wooden nest box on a Siberian Elm across our drive to the southwest. This wasn't anything new because we've had Kestrels nest at various locations around our property for several years. But there was a problem when the young birds fledged. One youngster wasn't fully mature enough to fly and it was found on the ground beneath the nest box. Liz was concerned so at night I placed the young Kestrel in a wire cage and left it under the tree so the parent birds could see it was still there. In the morning I would put it on the ground. The parent birds would be seen near the youngster but it was clear that the bird was failing. After a couple days the young falcon (Kestrels are falcons) started coming across the driveway towards Liz. I instructed Liz not to feed the bird but like most good wives she failed to heed my advice and offered the bird some hamburger meat. That was a game changer! The bird would no longer stay beneath the tree and kept coming to the house - so we started feeding it road kill. In a week or so the bird was able to fly so we released it. Thinking it was a female she was given the name of Kessy.

After her release she would roost at the top of an old dead American Elm tree or stay on the roof of our garage but come evening she came down for handouts. During feeding sessions Kessy would frantically flap her wings and grab at the food offerings. Our young grandson was thrilled when Kessy would swoop down and land on his outstretched hand to eat supper as he held it above his head. To facilitate feeding I nailed an eight-inch square piece of plywood on a short stick and that became the evening feeding station when she flew down for supper. On one occasion Kessy landed on Liz's head while talking with a friend sitting in her car.

There was ample time for her parents and sibling to join her in the dead tree but we never observed them with her. I cannot recall how long this went on but one day Kessy failed to appear and she was never seen again. She slept in the bare dead tree and I suspected that an owl got her during the night.



**Sightings .....**



White-tailed squirrels(?) on PSU campus

ring-billed gulls

snow geese, Ross's goose

white-breasted nuthatch

white-throated sparrow

Dark-eyed junco

THANK YOU, Carol Newcomb, for serving as Refreshment Hostess for so many years. We have had some fantastic "spreads" and some great food to accompany the meeting.

Thank you, Sue Hegel, for providing the refreshments at the October meeting. The flax cookies were such a hit. Sue sent along the recipe for those of you who want to make a batch for yourselves. Sue got the recipe from Carol Newcomb and now you can have it too...

**Farmhand Flax Cookies**

- 1 1/3 cups butter
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups lightly packed brown sugar
- 2 1/3 cups flax seed
- 3 large eggs
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp. baking soda
- 3 cups oatmeal



In a bowl, cream butter and sugars, add flax seed. In another bowl, beat eggs & vanilla together. Combine with flax mixture.

Sift together the flour & soda. Mix in oatmeal and combine with other ingredients. Form dough into 1 1/2 inch round logs. Place in freezer & chill.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.



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

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

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

**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*  
**Renewals:** Contact National directly for Audubon Magazine.

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

- YES I wish to become a FIRST-TIME member of both organizations (\$20.00).
- YES I wish to become a RENEWING member of the local chapter (\$15.00).

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Chapter Code: C I Z J 100Z



**Chapter Field Trip Calendar**

December 2011: Various Christmas Bird Counts, Neosho County/Parsons & Cherokee County in Kansas, and Joplin & Prairie State Park in Missouri. Dates to be announced.

January 28, 2012: Wildcat Glades Nature Center, Joplin, MO. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at North McDonald's, 3008 N. Broadway in Pittsburg for breakfast. Leave by 8:00 to carpool to the nature center and chert glades. Driving and walking tour, but it is possible to remain in the nature while the rest of the group walks some of the trails.

February 25, 2012: Ponds & Pits of Crawford County. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Applebee's, 2802 N. Broadway in Pittsburg, then travel to various locations to view migrating water birds, raptors, and winter residents. Mostly driving tour. If the weather cooperates, we will once again try to view the Jim Hughes wetland restoration on this same trip.



**Wilderness Park (Pittsburg) Fieldtrip**

The adventurous group took a break from birding to get their picture taken. Join us on the next fieldtrip. We have a great time!



**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.

