



# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2011-2013

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Meagan Duffee

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March 2012

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## Leave it to Beavers by Steve Ford

When Cindy and I first acquired the land on which our house now sits we walked down to the lake at dusk with a couple of lawn chairs to enjoy the evening. We were charmed by an occasional “kerplunk!” of a beaver’s tail.



Over the years that “charm” has cost us thousands of dollars and thousands of hours of work, and I came to learn that my wife can swear like a sailor. Don’t get me wrong, we like and respect the occasional beaver. I’ve caught small beavers by hand (a spotted pup is downright ugly compared to the cuteness of a baby beaver). They are of course an integral and beneficial part of a natural landscape, and historically played a major role in exploration of North America and the founding of some of our earliest cities as fur-trade centers - St. Louis for example. It’s just that they can be so destructive and disruptive. We love our pin oak trees. They are one of the most valuable trees in the Midwest for wildlife. A beaver can girdle and kill a 75-year-old pin oak in a couple of nights. You’d think a beaver would find the taste and texture of an oak tree disgusting, but beavers seem to prefer them (and naturally don’t touch the weed-trees like honey locust and Osage orange). I really don’t want to know how much time and money we’ve spent wrapping oak trees with fencing against beavers.

There’s more. Years ago we had one Kentucky coffee-tree on our place. One. And even though it was on the very top of a steep hill, a beaver reduced it to a pointed stump. I’ve had to walk very carefully through a large patch of beaver-cut giant

ragweed stalks. I say very carefully, because the extremely sharp points left on the big stalks were much like punji sticks, and a fall could have been disastrous! Last summer I had to completely rebuild a sizeable footbridge and berm because a beaver den undermined and collapsed it.

I’ve tried trapping and shooting, to no avail. They know how to snap traps by pushing sticks into them, and they usually don’t swim on the surface until it is too dark to get a shot.

The abundance of beavers used to be kept in check by predators such as wolves, bears, and mountain lions, and later by (efficient) trappers, but since about the mid 1980s the price of fur has been too low to make beaver trapping worth the effort, so populations have grown quite large. It seems to me that for the last couple of years beaver numbers have dramatically increased, or at least the signs have – dens and damage in new and sometimes unexpected places. Three years ago a little pond next to our driveway was clear and picturesque. Two years ago beavers moved in, much to our surprise, and now it looks like a mudhole for a herd of cattle. Why the recent increase in abundance and/or activity? I don’t know, but it seems to have occurred at the same time water levels in our area have dropped – most strip-pits and creeks have been low for two years. I’m just at a loss to know what to do about the problem. I’m pretty sure the Democrats are to blame. Maybe I’ll call Newt Gingrich!



### March Presentation Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

**Mar 29:**

*The American Flatbow* by Sean Lynott, Regional Fisheries Supervisor, Chanute.

Sean will outline a brief history of archery in America and the construction of wooden bows.

THANKS  
FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER  
ARTICLES!

**Board Meeting Highlights  
Barb Robins, Secretary**

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

**Call To Order (Meagan):** 6:00 p.m.  
**Treasurer's Report (Liz):** Checking account balance of \$3,779.91.

**Programs (Martha):** Next month, Sean Lynott presents the American flat bow.

**Field Trips:** None this month.

**Bluebird Boxes (Delia):** 5-Mile Camp, behind Downstream Casino, could use some bluebird boxes to install on their grounds; would we want to donate six of them? Moved, seconded, and approved.

Delia will deliver them.

**Snowy Owl Taxidermy:** Linda Phipps would like us to contribute toward getting a snowy owl stuffed for an exhibit at the Southeast Kansas Nature Center and would like for us to help with the cost.. After discussion, Meagan volunteered to contact Linda to see if a more reasonable fee can be arrived upon than Linda was given. Meagan will also check with other taxidermists.

**Picnic in May (Bob):** Should we continue to provide chicken and ask members to bring sides? We agreed to continue that plan.

**Financial Statement  
Liz Mangile, Treasurer**

**March, 2012**

Beginning Balance----- \$3752.88

**Credits**

Local Dues 26.25  
Deposit from Nat. Audubon 40.00  
Total..... \$ 66.25

**Debits**

Newsletter \$ 15.97  
Total..... \$ 15.97

Ending balance----- \$3803.16

**From my Nest  
Meagan Duffee, President**



As many of you know, spring is just around the corner. But with the temperatures how they have been lately it seems like spring is already here. With spring and warm weather comes baby animals. So many people think that when they see a baby animal alone it means that its parents have abandoned it. In many cases this would include baby deer. But as many of us know this is not the case. Many animals leave their young alone while the parents go off to feed, this is especially true with deer. Fawns (baby deer) have no scent when they are born, and as such this allows them to lay perfectly still in the tall grass as their mothers move off to feed. Even though you might not be able to see the doe, I can promise you that she can see, smell and hear you. Remind those that you know that baby deer (and several other baby animals) have not been abandoned.

Now onto the baby birds. Each spring I get countless calls about baby birds who are found in peoples lawns or on their property. Its a good thing that people worry about the wildlife around them, but sometimes the actions that they are doing can harm the animal much more than save them. Sometimes humans think they are doing good by "saving" a baby bird when in reality they are dooming that animals for potentially the rest of their life. As many know, baby birds leave the nest long before they are fully able to fly. This behavior is known as fledging. Birds do this in order to gain more "leg" room. Have you ever looked into a robin nest with half-grown babies? Its very overcrowded. The babies leave and start a stage in their life called branching. This is the stage in which they start learning to fly, and are often times found upon the ground hopping along. If you come across a baby bird, leave it alone or gently place it into a branch in a tree or nearby shrub. I can guarantee that the baby will not stay there for long. If, for some reason, you come across a baby who was thrown from the nest (say from a very bad storm) and you do not see the parents for an entire day call the Kansas Wildlife and Parks or a person who is trained and who has proper permits to rehab that certain animals.

Get outside, enjoy the spring weather! Enjoy the flowers and the calls of birds as they fight for territory and mates! Watch for those babies, enjoy them from a distance and remember a picture is better than actually touching or moving baby animals from their natural habitat.

**February Featured Speaker:**



“Hobby Beekeeping—Getting Started and Staying With It” was presented by Dan Mosier II, who is a Farlington Fish Hatchery biologist and considers himself still a novice beekeeper after taking up the hobby five years ago. He presented his information in the form of a recipe, giving us the necessary start-up equipment as ingredients. We learned that a small hobby hive will need such items as a bottom board, one or two deep hive boxes of selected sizes, a queen excluder screen, and frames to collect the honey. The bee ingredient consisted of three pounds of honeybees and a bred queen.

Dan brought the presentation alive—literally—by showing us a frame of live bees and a queen, and examples of the various “ingredients” he had explained in detail. We also received some biological information and heard how he expands his hobby by “rescuing” feral hives (removing them from unwanted places and relocating them).

After hearing Dan’s instructions for installation and maintenance, we certainly had enough information to decide if we wanted to take up the hobby.



The picture frame donated by Alice Stratton, Chicopee, was won by Madeline Reed, Pittsburg.

A bag of thistle seed was won by Bob Mangile.

**CRITTER CONNECTIONS** by Bob Mangile

**Cedar Waxwing**

On February 23, 2011 a woman in Coffeyville found an injured Cedar Waxwing, *Bombycilla cedrorum*, which was wearing a band and reported it to Ed Miller with the KDW&P's. Miller learned the bird had been banded by Ms. Jennifer McCabe on August 6, 2008 at the Teton Science School in Jackson Wyoming – 914 miles from where it was found in Coffeyville. It was a female, thought to be at least three years old. While attending the March 2, 2010 Southeast Kansas Audubon meeting in Parsons, Miller displayed the injured bird and asked if I would deliver it to the PSU rehabilitation center. The bird was later placed in my care. It appeared to have a broken furcula (fused clavicles - commonly called the wishbone) and an injury above its bill. (See photos.)

We kept her a box, with a few added branches, on our moderately warm back porch. A jar-lid was used for water and another for food – which included blueberries, grapes, soaked raisins and apples – all were cut into small pieces. She was deliberate in her behavior and often took and swallowed whole blueberries directly from our fingers.

My wife decided to name her Meta after our long deceased neighbor lady!

She gradually began to use her wings as she hopped from branch to branch. One wing drooped down a bit but she was definitely on the mend. As spring weather arrived we moved her to the garage in a 2'x 2' x 3' high wire cage enhanced with pin oak branches - with winter leaves still attached - and some Juniper or Eastern Red Cedar (evergreen) bows. She received some direct sunlight when the overhead garage door was opened and she appeared to be a happy camper!

The rehab went on through the summer months with feedings two or three times a day. And like a boxer who knocked down his opponent she went to a neutral corner of the cage when we opened to door to feed her. Waxwings are not erratic acting as are some other species of small passerine (perching) birds. Her ability to fly steadily improved as summer wore on. I began releasing her into the enclosed aviary of my hen house where she soon learned to fly in and out of the building and landing on the branches I'd installed. After several days it



was apparent that she was able to fly with confidence and control.

By early August she appeared ready to fly free again but we decided to wait until the September 6, 2010 meeting of the SEK Audubon chapter as the release date. That is where we got her and that is where we planned to release her! And so it was on that eventful evening we loaded Meta into a carrying box and delivered her to the meeting in Parsons. There was still plenty of daylight and it was clear and calm – the group gathered and waited in anticipation of the release. And then it happened! The box was opened and Meta flew straight and strong directly to the top of a tree. The Nature loving group broke into applause as I felt the instant pangs of knowing I would miss her. We are not likely to learn how well Meta fared in the wild or for how long. But wouldn't it be amazing if we get a report that she was recaptured again in Jackson, Wyoming?

**Sightings .....**


American woodcock



Turkey vulture



Eastern phoebe

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

Remember to renew your Sperry-Galligar Chapter dues.

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

**For first-time local membership**, send \$20.00 and you will become a member of both organizations, receive 4 copies of Audubon Magazine annually and 8 copies of Sperry-Galligar Newsletter. *Please make your check to: National Audubon Society.*

\_\_\_ *YES I wish to become a FIRST-TIME member of both organizations (\$20.00).*

**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*

\_\_\_ *YES I wish to become a RENEWING member of the local chapter (\$15.00).*

Future National Renewals: Contact National directly for Audubon Magazine.

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

Please Print

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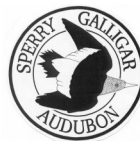
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City \_\_\_\_\_

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

Chapter Code: C2ZJ10OZ



**Chapter Field Trip Calendar**

**March 31, 2012:** Heron Rookery, West Mineral, KS. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Big Brutus. Emmett Sullivan will then lead us to a great blue heron rookery. We will also look for early shorebirds and other birds at nearby strip pits. Driving and walking tour.

**April 28, 2012:** Warblers & Spring Migrants, Roaring River State Park, MO. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Applebees in Pittsburg to carpool to Roaring River to see spring warbler varieties and other spring migrants such as scarlet tanager, painted buntings, etc. Driving and walking tour. Habitat is such that one can find a picnic table and just sit and watch for species or take one of the many hiking trails over the hills of the park and look down on species. This will be an all day trip as it is about two hours to the park. Bring snacks, lunch and dress accordingly.

**May 19, 2012:** Restored Prairie Habitat, Max Good property, Parsons, KS Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Applebees in Pittsburg to carpool to Parsons to view various native flowers, grasses, insects, birds, & trees in a native prairie restoration project.

Elma Hurt, a.k.a. "Bluebird Lady", has already checked 1/3 of her bluebird boxes and has found 2.5 nests started. Spring is here.



Elma is an enthusiastic promoter of bluebirds and gives programs, advice, and encouragement to those wanting to attract bluebirds.



**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.

