



# 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)

**May Meeting  
Picnic 6:00 p.m.  
Presentation  
7:00 p.m.**

**May 31, 6:00—9:00 p.m.  
Sperry-Galligar Audubon  
Picnic. Homer Cole  
Community Bldg.  
3003 North Joplin St.**

Steve and Margaret Hoyle  
will present "Sights of New  
Zealand".

**THANKS  
FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER  
ARTICLES!**

May 2012

VOLUME 2012 ISSUE 5

## Spring Trip to the Great Bend Area by Diane McCallum

I inherited an interest in birds from my parents, Norm and Ruth Griswold. When they invited me to join them for a birding trip in mid-April, I jumped at the chance and met them in Great Bend, KS. We drove to Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area in the late afternoon. At first we didn't see much water, but then we started to see low water on either side of the road. Still, there were no birds. We kept going and were finally rewarded by the sight of long-billed dowitchers, Wilson's phalaropes, yellow-legs, blue-winged and green-winged teal, avocets, several peeps, black-necked stilts and great blue herons. I caught a glimpse of a muskrat beside the water. When we pulled onto a side road so we could turn around, we had to stop for a bird in the middle of the road; it turned out to be a yellow-headed blackbird, so we admired its plumage for a while. We also saw cowbirds, shovellers, double-crested cormorants, coots, Franklin's gulls in a large group, white pelicans and common egrets. It was our first day and we'd already seen 24 species!



The next day we went to Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. We talked to a woman at the visitors' center, who told us we'd missed the whooping cranes and large flocks of ducks by a little over a week. She also told us about the tornado that went through the center of Quivira the weekend before; she and the rest of the staff had to take shelter from it as it passed less than a mile from them. We later saw the damage: splintered trees, utility poles snapped in two or three places, downed wires and fences. That was eye-opening.

We got a close look at white-faced ibis and a lark sparrow at Quivira. Also, an American kestrel decided to show off by perching on a fence post with its back turned to us and spreading out its tail several times. We also saw gadwall, ruddy ducks, a flicker, a

bald eagle, tree swallows, pintails and turkey vultures, among other things, in addition to some of the species we'd seen at Cheyenne Bottoms the day before.

At one point, I spotted what I thought was a grebe in the water. It didn't take me long to realize I was mistaken, however; the grebes in my book didn't look anything like the bird I saw through my binoculars. After some page-flipping, I stumbled upon the right bird: a female hooded merganser. (For those of you who were at Thursday night's meeting, that's how I knew what that bird was.)

On our last day, we returned to Cheyenne Bottoms, where we saw huge flocks of long-billed dowitchers, white pelicans and Franklin's gulls. We got to see a large flock of Wilson's phalaropes turning crazy circles to stir up food in the water. We also discovered a spot where there was an amazing number of egrets and great blue herons: we saw at least 10-12 egrets and 15-20 herons in that one place. There were cattle egrets in their showy breeding plumage, too. We saw a white-tailed deer gracefully leap over a fence as if it wasn't even there. We also saw upland sandpipers, immature ring-billed gulls, barn swallows and more.

As if to bid us farewell, the white pelicans performed a few graceful flights above, soaring at just the right angle to let the sunlight catch their white backs, a sharp contrast to the black on their wings. That is a sight I will never grow tired of witnessing.

So even though we "missed" a lot of birds, we had a great time and got to see plenty. The next time my parents invite me to go birding, I'll jump in the car for another adventure.



**Board Meeting Highlights**  
**Barb Robins, Secretary**

**Attending:** 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:** 6:00 p.m.

**Treasurer (Liz):** \$3,563.13 in checking account.

**Programs (Martha):** Next month at the picnic, Steve and Margaret Hoyle are featured speakers and will talk about their New Zealand trip.

**Field Trips (Carolyn):** This Saturday we will go to Roaring River; meet at Applebee's at 6:30 (Ozark Gateway Audubon Society in Missouri will go, also). May 12 we will go to the Good pasture restored prairie and wetlands, meet at Applebee's at 7:00 to car-pool.

**Bike Ride (Delia):** She reminded us of the ride Saturday to the Nature Reserve.

**Summer Camp (Delia):** This year the format will be changed to eight Tuesday mornings in June and July. It will be for students completing or entering 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The charge will be \$15 for each session, with a discount if attending all sessions. Volunteers are needed.

**Picnic (Liz):** It will be from 6:00-9:00, May 31, at the Homer Cole Center. Tonight, she will send around the signup sheet again.

**New Business:**  
**Liz:** She shared a letter from Linda Phipps thanking us for the \$300 donation toward the snowy owl taxidermy.  
**Bob:** The Jayhawk Audubon Society sends him their monthly newsletters, which he will loan to anyone wishing to read them.  
**Cindy:** Audubon of Kansas says that three whooping cranes were shot; AOK would like to have the law changed to limit hunting hours in an attempt to prevent misidentification. If you wish to support their

**Financial Statement**  
**Liz Mangile, Treasurer**

**April 2012**

Beginning Balance-----	\$3579.60
<b>Debits</b>	
Newsletter	\$ 16.47
300 stamps	135.00
Member Dues	20.00
Total.....	\$ 171.47
<b>Credits</b>	
Local & Nat. Dues	\$ 50.00
Total.....	\$ 50.00
Ending balance-----	\$3458.13

**Fieldtrip Reports**  
**Carolyn & Charles Chips**

**MAY FIELD TRIP**  
**Trip to Good's Woods**

Diane, Martha, Marvin, Donna, Bob, Liz, Wayne, Megan, Charles, and Mike and Kay (from Chicago) gathered in Applebee's parking lot on Saturday, May 12th for a field trip to Good's Woods southeast of Parsons. On the way over, Emmett joined the caravan. After arriving at Good's Woods, we liberally applied tick and chigger repellent and started off on our tour.

What a prairie oasis in the middle of Southeast farmland! Max and Eweleen Good have worked very diligently over the last several years to restore what was once plowed fields and hedge rows to some of the most diverse prairie in Kansas. We observed approximately 200 varieties of native plants and trees that the Goods have restored to this parcel of land. Also observed were over 25 species of birds as well as butterflies, other insects (including a few ticks), various species of fish, and even a small snake. One member even lay on her stomach to feed the fish by hand.

The group had a splendid time and were reluctant to leave this very special place. We thank the Goods for sharing their enthusiasm for and knowledge of this very important project they have undertaken to restore this small bit of Kansas to its original splendor

**APRIL FIELD TRIP**  
**Roaring River State Park**

Since there was little interest in a field trip to Roaring River State Park, a discussion was held right after the regular Sperry-Galligar Audubon monthly meeting and it was decided to try Marais des Cygne Wildlife Area north of Pleasanton. So, Liz, Wayne, Megan, Charlie, Carolyn and Martha met at Applebee's in Pittsburg on Saturday, April 28th at 6:30 a.m. and headed north.

The weather was a bit cloudy and cool (63 degrees), but the birding was wonderful. The countryside, water ways, and woods were alive with the sound of music – bird music that is. Sometimes it was really difficult to separate the many different species singing. We did identify over 80 species of birds. Among those identified were fish crow, pileated woodpecker, barred owl, white pelican, common yellow-throat, peregrine falcon, prothonotary warbler, white-faced ibis, Wilson's phalarope, pectoral sandpiper, solitary sandpiper, spotted sandpiper, Forster's tern, summer tanager, and dozens of indigo buntings, along with an American kestrel having lunch on a utility wire.



On the way home, the group stopped by Gunn Park in Fort Scott and had several sightings there. A good time was had by all and all agreed that it was a very good day to go birding.



The hummingbird feeder and seed mix was won by Donna Brown.

## CRITTER CONNECTIONS by Bob Mangile



Several years ago, while sitting in a lawn chair out back, I saw a Carolina Wren hauling some hay into my feed building. Moments later I saw a repeat of that activity so I decided that next time I would immediately dash into the building and see where the nest was being constructed. Interestingly she/he emerged from a plastic shopping bag hanging on the wall that was filled with other shopping bags. Carefully I peeked into the top and there was the nest. Now I anticipated finding eggs in the near future and eventually I did. The incubation period is about two weeks so I remained vigilant and eventually I became the proud grand parent of a nest of baby wrens. Carolina Wrens have very loud songs and even with my bad hearing I could hear them singing during the feeding sessions. My almost constant activities in the building did not seem to bother them in any significant way and in about two more weeks the young fledged. They hopped about on the junk in the building and in the rafters for a day before being coaxed out by their parents.

Next day we had a problem! My wife said she could hear a baby bird chirping behind a sheet of plywood against the inside wall. I could not hear its calling! I moved half the contents of the building and found the baby bird haplessly chirping away facing certain death. So far so good but now what? Fledglings must be taught to find food by their parents and I wasn't able to supply spiders and other food items for any length of time. Knowing that parent birds will come to the rescue of their offspring in distress I walked out to the fence line where I thought the family might have spent the night and tried to agitate the fledgling in my hand – and it worked. It began making distress calls and within seconds I was under siege from both parents – and delighted, too. I placed the fledgling on the ground and both parents immediately attended the baby and coaxed it into the brushy fence line. Mission accomplished! Over the next many days I would see the entire family foraging in the peonies and under and around my outbuildings – the young following in tow and learning the ropes of survival.

A few days after the young fledged I installed a gallon can modified into what I considered a nice little nesting place ([see photo](#)) in my building where to plastic bags hung. And the next year they accepted my new apartment without hesitation. The nesting can has been used for several years but only once a year. They nest more than once a year (multiple nesters) and on occasion I've found nests in other buildings, in a plastic jug under a shelter house and even in my neighbor's large boat.

Carolina Wrens do not migrate south for the winter and have a difficult time during the winter, especially during extreme cold and snow and ice cover. So I keep the upper section of a garage window, under the awning, open all year long. During extreme winter weather I put out bits of suet, sunflower seed and mealworms in a dish in the garage – and they shamelessly eat it with gusto.

Addendum: Good news! On April 16, 2012 the Carolina Wrens hatched another brood in the tin can nest. They fledged on May 1, 2012.



## April Speaker



Mike Davis, from Ozark Gateway Audubon Society in Joplin, gave his presentation in a novel format: he tested our identification skills by showing slides and giving us field marks as hints if we didn't recognize the

bird immediately. We as audience (and birders) were required to explain how we identified them, and Mike told us characteristics to look for. This format enabled us to become involved and served as a teaching tool.

The bird photos ranged from common backyard birds to North and South American species not seen in this area; the latter certainly presented a challenge if we had not travelled to habitats where the birds reside.

Mike worked in the crime lab at MSSU and is a Missouri Master Naturalist.

## Sightings .....



**Birds are rolling in!  
These are some of the  
species Auduboners  
have been seeing.**

prairie chicken  
ruby-throated humming-  
bird  
Baltimore oriole  
white-winged dove  
American bittern  
green heron  
upland sandpiper  
great blue heron  
wood thrush  
warbling vireo  
great-crested flycatcher



See you in the fall.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Chapter Code: C2ZJ10OZ



**THIS MONTH'S MEETING**

**May**

**Join us for the annual**

**Sperry-Galligar Audubon**

**Picnic**

**Thursday, May 31, 6:00—9:00**

**Homer Cole Building**

**North Joplin St.**

**near Walmart**

Speakers will be

Steve & Margaret  
Hoyle,

Farlington, KS —

showing us the

**"Sights of New Zealand"**



**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.

