



NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2011-2013

President:

Wayne Bockelman

Vice President:

Megan Corrigan

Secretary

Barb Robins

Treasurer

Liz Mangile

Newsletter Editor

Cindy Ford

cford@pittstate.edu

**Nov/Dec Meeting
7:00 p.m.
Yates 102
PSU**

****Presentation****

Dec 5 — “Save the Last Dance—A Story of North American Grassland Grouse” by Noppadol Paothong, wildlife photographer with the Missouri Department of Conservation. He will share incredible stories about these birds. Book signing after program.

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

Nov/Dec 2013

VOLUME 2013 ISSUE 8

Focus on Prairie Chickens

I've never seen a prairie chicken or a sage grouse. I'd never even heard of them until I briefly met Nappadol Paothong at last year's Prairie Jubilee celebration at Prairie State Park. Nappadol has taken thousands of photos of these endangered birds and put the best of them together in a book called "Save the Last Dance." The birds are festive and fun – prairie chickens sport bright yellow neck patches popping off the page, while the sage grouses display pointy tail feathers standing all in a row, like it thinks it's a peacock but without the blue and green color. Eye-candy! You can't help but fall in love with these birds from Nappadol's photos. The book's website, <http://www.savethelastdancebook.com/> shows a photo of Noppadol freezing in a camouflage tent with a huge telephoto lens, and explains that this is what he's been working on for the last 10 years. But you don't feel any of that difficulty or adversity in the book. The photos make it look like the birds are so comfortable and friendly, as if one might wander into your yard and poke around under your feeder. Well, that's not likely, but what is likely is that Nappadol Paothong, wildlife photographer for the Missouri Department of Conservation, will wander into Pittsburg on December 5th and present our next Sperry Galligar Audubon program. We hope you'll join us at 7pm in Yates 102 on November 5th. Books will be available for purchase, if you want to start your Christmas shopping.

Megan Corrigan, Vice Pres., S-G Audubon



Christmas Bird Count History



The first Christmas Bird Count in Pittsburg took place on December 26, 1923, per CBC National. On person recorded 20 species.

The next Pittsburg count was on December 26, 1932. A total of 21 species were recorded, also by one person.

The counts were started again on December 29, 1958 with two participants. They may have continued ever since, but definitive data was not available on the CBC web site.

The coldest count recorded was on December 24, 1966 with a low of minus 5 F. and a high of 31 F. Three participants were out for a total of eight hours and found 21 species. I left the web site and did not record the 21 species. Unfortunately, the names of the participants are not available. **Larry Herbert, Joplin, MO**

I helped with two CBC's when Dr. Sperry was doing them around 1975-76-77 - not sure which years though. I remember him telling me that he thought that one particular species was growing more and more scant and then after 25 years they exploded. He seemed to think there was more wildlife at that time than in the recent past. BTW he/we walked miles on foot, through the snow! No birding in the car. Becky Bosso was one of the folks that assisted him. In fact she was the compiler, as best I can recall.

Bob Mangile, Pittsburg, KS

In 1988, I proposed a Mined Land Christmas Bird Count, located in Cherokee County, and am pleased to report that the count is still going. It is always held on New Year's Day where six to 12 people participate each year. We meet in Scammon in the early morning, anticipating an average of 65 species will be counted.

The weather varies from frigid to balmy, but we always see something interesting during the day.

Steve Ford, McCune, KS

Board Meeting Highlights Barb Robins, Secretary

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

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

Treasurer's Report (Liz): Balance of \$10,556.81; \$6,355 of that was formerly in CDs. The Kansas Community Teachers Credit Union has the best interest rates. It was moved, seconded, and approved that we authorize Liz Mangile to place \$5,000 into a one-and-a-half-year CD, and \$3,000 into a shorter term (one-year) CD in the Teachers Credit Union.

Publicity: Wayne showed examples of broadsheets announcing tonight's meeting that he had obtained permission and had posted around campus.

Membership: Cindy has received a few postcard responses from National members that had been included in the most recent newsletter mailing.

Programs: Megan announced that she has presenters scheduled through March.

Birdseed Sale, December 7: Steve stated that we have sold all the birdhouses; do we want to make more? Discussion indicated that we did. Steve will organize the process.

Field Trips: Delia has scheduled a bird walk at Wildcat Glades this Saturday, with optional attendance at a presentation afterward.

The President's Annual Report to the National Office will be completed and sent next week, well ahead of the deadline.

Revision of Bylaws: Discussion ensued concerning an updated statement to replace the requirement to notify the membership by "mail" with one such as "make a responsible effort to communicate". It will be written and later e-mailed to the board for discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45.

October Meeting Presenter Matt Gearheart



Matt Gearhart of Kansas City granted us an encore visit, and took us this time across the International Date Line to "Australia: A Birding Adventure Down Under". He made the trip three years ago with his wife, before the disastrous flooding and bush fires. Courageously, they undertook most of the trip on their own, without a guide.

On the way to Australia, Matt and Jen stopped in Dubai to visit a friend and take in the architectural and avian sights. Although the architecture was more spectacular, they managed to see such bird species as flamingoes, mynahs, and a hoopoe relative. Most of the Gearheart's Australian visit was confined to the east coast, including two rainforest habitats. Matt showed us impressive photos of birds, bats, and marsupials—impressive because of the secretive nature of these creatures and his point-and-shoot-with-spotting-scope shots. Matt was disappointed that he didn't get to see a cassowary in the rainforest, but we were highly entertained by the "watch for cassowary"-related road signs. The Gearhearts' adventures included Tasmania, and they were fortunate to see, identify, and photograph several of the island's endemic species. All in all, Matt spotted 245 bird species on his three-week trip; many of those cannot be viewed in the wild anywhere else in the world. And the bonus included spring in October!

Barb Robins, Secretary

Financial Statement Liz Mangile, Treasurer

November 2013

Beginning Balance	\$ 10,571.78
Debits	
Newsletter	\$ 14.47
Membership to Nat. Aud.	20.00
Gift Certificate for speaker	10.00
2 CD's to KTCC	8,005.00
Credits	
Membership dues	210.00
Total	\$ 2,731.81



September Meeting Highlights by Barb Robins

President Wayne Bockelman reminded us once more to re-up our local dues if we haven't already done so. The refreshments slots have been filled, but it would be nice to have a second person each month to help. Please contact Liz Mangile. The birdseed sale is December 7, and we need volunteers to man the sales table and the seed truck. Bob is passing around a sign-up sheet. We will make birdhouses for the sale; Steve will contact us for volunteer help. There will be a field trip to Wildcat Glades for a bird walk along Shoal Creek this Saturday. Meet there at 8:00 and call 417-782-6287 if you'd like to attend a presentation at 10:00 entitled, "My Summer with the Birds".

Time to get your dues paid for the year. Don't miss out on a thing!

Thanks to Donna Brown for refreshments. What a spread!

Critter Connection by Bob Mangile

Cooper's Hawk

Over the years I've had many situations dealing with the Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*). Of course I've observed many through binoculars on field trips but the up-close encounters are the most memorable.

Starting about the early part of October Cooper's Hawks' start visiting my back yard, usually in the mornings and late evenings, trying to get at my caged pigeons and doves. They continue to visit regularly until the weather warms in April and then disperse to their breeding territories. At times they've managed to kill a few birds through the one-inch poultry wire but they cannot fly away with their intended prey. However, they will maim them bad enough that it leads to their death – some even found with their heads removed. It seems that the colder the temperature the more persistent the hawk!

Often times it is the juvenile Cooper's Hawk that returns day after day hoping for a meal. One would think that the lack of success would force them to hunt elsewhere. Most likely their hunting skills aren't well developed and the food supply is low during the colder months of the year. Last year one killed a bantam hen in our yard. Several years ago a Wood Duck hen was killed leaving the nest cavity in the tree by our house.

The accipiter hawks include: the Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk and the Northern Goshawk – all short winged species that can rapidly maneuver through the trees with ease. They burst out of nowhere on unsuspecting prey and catch them before they can gain good flight speed. I recall sitting in a lawn chair about 25 feet in front of my pigeon cage when a Cooper's Hawk swooshed three feet over my

head flying full-out directly at my pigeon cage. The pigeons exploded out of fear from the approaching danger. I thought it would kill itself by smashing into the fencing but instead it pulled to a safe landing on the cage. They are astonishingly quick and agile.

A few winters ago, during a very cold and windy day, I went out to the barn and saw a Cooper's Hawk on the ground in front of my pigeon coop. It must have been half starved because I walked up to the bird while it was sleeping and caught it with my bare hands. (I do not encourage anyone to try that!) It was an adult in poor condition (see photo) and I remembered seeing a dead squirrel on the road so I got the squirrel and fed parts of it to the hawk – which it ate readily. I fed it for about a week and when it looked strong enough to be released I gave it to John Hartley to release on his was to Galena.

These birds are quite bold when hungry. More than once I've caught Cooper's Hawks trying to catch the caged birds inside my barn - which I hauled away for release. Some are almost impossible to chase away from the pigeon cages and will allow my approach to within 10 feet before they fly. I have several photos of them trying to get at my birds. ###



Sightings.....



True Hawks



Cooper's hawk

Check the size. Cooper's hawks are larger than sharp-shinned.



Sharp-shinned hawk

A great big thanks to Alex and Luci Bednekoff for donating \$60.00 toward rental of the truck for our feed sale. Next time you see them be sure to tell them thank you, as it helps a lot with our organization's only money making project.



Talk to Steve and Cindy Ford about the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Breeding Bird Survey that takes place every June. They are planning one more year to participate in the program and are looking for folks to take over two routes.

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
P.O. Box 205
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762-0205



Please Print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

e-mail address _____



Events,
&
Miscellany

Annual Bird Seed Sale

Our major money-making and very popular Sperry-Galligar Bird Seed Sale will be held:

**Saturday, December 7
Pittsburg Mall**

Come during the day to purchase your winter supply of bird seed (prices the same as last year) or come help with sales that day.

Ways to help with the sale:

- *Carry seed from the truck
- *Sell crafts and goodies inside
- *Bring some bird crafts to sell
- *Bring a plate of cookies to sell

Sign up for a 2-hour block of time at the next meeting.



**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**

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.

