



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

**Feb Meeting
Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Yates 102
PSU
Presentation**

**Feb 27 — “Purple Martin
Biology and Management”
by Andrew Burnett,
Purple Martin Conserva-
tion Association,
Parsons, KS**

Andrew will introduce us to purple martins, colony management, housing designs, and protection from predators & weather.

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

Feb 2014

VOLUME 2014 ISSUE 2

Woodpeckers of Southeast Kansas

By Bob Mangile

There are seven woodpecker species normally found in our area, i.e., Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Northern Flicker, Pileated and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. They are cavity nesters and considered songbirds but they cannot sing! Instead they rapidly tap on hollow tree limbs, gutters, etc. to declare their territory and to attract mates. They can hop up a tree or backward down a tree using their tail as a brace – a means of locomotion called “hitching”.

Since moving to our current residence over 35 years ago we have had all seven species visit our property. However, the surrounding habitat has changed and so have the numbers of each species. The large, forest loving, Pileated Woodpecker is not a regular backyard visitor but has been observed passing through from time to time. The Hairy Woodpecker, another forest loving species, ventures into towns during the winter months when food becomes scarce.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is considered to be our only truly migratory woodpecker. It breeds in Canada and the Great Lakes Region but winters from Kansas southward. They often visit our suet feeders ([my photo at right](#)) in the winter and seem to get tamer throughout the winter.

A tree trunk with a series of small holes around its trunk is the work of the Sapsucker – which drinks the oozing sap from the holes.



Most unique is the Red-headed Woodpecker (Sperry-Galligar Audubon’s Icon). Its diet includes; bird-eggs and nestlings, mice, berries, acorns, and pecans and is adept at catching insects on the wing. They store food items in various hiding places and boldly defend their cache against intruders. Jan Hall had one that completely filled a bird-house with acorns. Many years ago one took claim to one of our bird feeders and would swoop down on my wife when she filled the feeder. They are not shy when it comes to combat and will not hesitate to do battle with other birds, e.g., European Starlings and the much

larger Pileated Woodpecker. Unlike the undulating flight of most woodpeckers they have a mostly level flight. They nest only in dead trees and wooden utility poles and have suffered great population decline due to the orderly removal of dead trees.

The Northern Flicker likes open woodlands and patches of prairie where it is often seen in small groups during early spring foraging for its favorite food – ants. Their loud rolling rattling “wik-wik-wik” call in the spring indicates that the mating season is underway. One year they nested in a squirrel box off our patio and we enjoyed watching them feed their young from 20 feet away.



**Board Meeting Highlights
Barb Robins, Secretary**

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

Call To Order (Wayne): 6:00 p.m.
Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance of \$4,137.89; \$3,000 and \$5,000 in CDs in Kansas Teachers Credit Union. The birdseed, crafts, and food sale made \$955.33. We received a \$60 donation for truck rental. We also made \$63.00 in birdhouse sales at the Krimson Kulture store.

Programs: Tonight's was advertised in part by a flyer made by Bob. We are able to schedule Nappadol Poathong for the May picnic if the times can be worked out to accommodate his schedule. Megan will confirm it.

CBC: Steve passed out copies of the species and number sighted.

Field Trips: Nothing local planned; we can go to the February 8 Missouri Dept. of Conservation program and short-eared owl viewing trip.

Bluebird Box Project: Bob and Steve are working with a student to place and study 60 boxes on Monahan Prairie. Bob, Liz, and Steve made them and have acquired material for poles from various sources.

SGAS Projects: Wayne asked for ideas; be thinking. Perhaps we could help with a Boy Scout project.

National Audubon By-Laws Revisions: They are on its website; we should keep aware of their changes that might apply to ours. Meeting adjourned at 6:45.

**January Meeting Presenter
Neil Snow**

The human race has an inherent need to organize, although often this is contradicted by our desktops and closets. Dr. Neil Snow, who recently joined the PSU botany faculty and is the director of the Sperry Herbarium, gave us a thorough explanation of the science community's ongoing attempts to place the natural world into niches in his presentation, "Bird



Species: Who Decides and How?"

Dr. Snow enlightened us on the concept of "splitting and lumping" species, i.e., dividing bird species into more than one, or combining them into fewer. The process has been controversial, and there is much disagreement among scientists on not only that process but the very definition of what a species is. He mentioned pioneers of evolutionary synthesis in the 1950s, an important decade.

The process of species determination is unique to the ornithological community; there is a North American Classification Committee to evaluate studies and recommend changes. No other organization has such a process. When species changes are agreed upon, they are added to the latest supplement of the North American Checklist.

Ornithologists have many disagreements concerning the biological species concept (physical appearance) versus the phylogenetic one (character traits). From Dr. Snow's discussion, it was apparent that these disagreements can get very emotional and political; the questions may never be resolved. Besides resulting in the number of species substantially increasing in the coming decades, there are legal and protective legislation ramifications. He stated that the important factor in the philosophical differences is the quality and thoroughness of the data.

We certainly received a new perspective on the species determination process, and the direct effect on our birding activities will continue to be the lengthening or shortening of our checklists. Will there be even more "little brown birds" to identify and list?

Barb Robins

**Financial Statement
Liz Mangile, Treasurer**

February 2014

Beginning Balance -----	\$4,144.89
Debits	
Newsletter Printing -----	\$ 7.00
Total Debits -----	\$ 7.00
Credits	
Local dues & nine bird houses	\$ 78.00
Credit from National Audubon	20.00
Total Credits -----	\$ 98.00
Ending Balance -----	\$4,235.89



General Meeting Notes

Bird Sightings: Many people have seen the Trumpeter and Mute Swans north of McCune. Also sighted recently have been Bald Eagles, Ross's Goose, and Loggerhead Shrike, among others.

Our eagle-sighting group made the front page of the Neosho Daily News, and Steve and Cindy Ford were featured in Patrick's People in the Morning Sun.

Steve reported that there was a record number of 19 participants in the Mined Land Christmas Bird Count; 66 species were sighted. He has a list you may pick up.

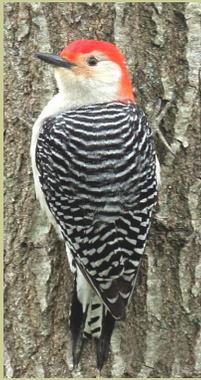
Megan Corrigan provided refreshments. Help is still needed for future programs; please sign up if you want to help.

Anyone may participate in a field trip of February 8 to Prairie State Park for a program on raptors by Jeff Cantrell, then on to a foray in Shawnee Trail State Park to view Short-eared Owls. Wayne provided the phone number/URL to register.

Barb Robins

Many thanks to Megan Corrigan for the fantastic refreshments in January.

Woodpeckers (continued from page 1)



The most often seen woodpeckers in our yard are the Red-bellied and Downy. The former gets its name from the, not easily seen, red patch of feathers on its belly. They have a short rattle call that is usually repeated several times. They are frequent visitors to the suet feeder as well as the whole grain corn squirrel feeder. They tend to get increasingly tamer in the summer and will "hitch" down the tree backward to get a whole grain of corn, then put it in the bark of the tree where they hammer it into pieces. It is interesting to watch how they then trap and eat the broken pieces of corn from between their breast and the tree trunk.



But it is the Downy that is the favorite woodpecker in the back yard. During spring their drumming on dead tree limbs is never ending. These little birds spend a lot of time at our suet feeders and will bring their fledglings to the suet feeders and feed them suet within 20 feet from us.

(The last four photos were taken by Donna Smith.)

Local Nesting Experiment Underway at Monahan

Habitat edges are the domain of many wildlife species. Natalia Schneider, a field biology student from Nova Prata, Brazil, will be experimenting with three such edges (woods/lake, woods/grass, and grass/marsh) at PSU's Monahan property near Cherokee. She will be putting bluebird boxes along each edge to ascertain which cavity-nesting birds use them, when they nest, and how successful they are. Other questions she hopes to answer include: how effective predator control tubes are, and if felt fabric on the ceilings of the boxes deter wasps.

She is shown here with fellow Brazilian, Fabio Giacomelli, assembling the structures at Steve Ford's barn near McCune. Natalia, Fabio, Bob Mangile, and Steve constructed the boxes themselves in Bob's garage. Much of the pipe to support the boxes and PVC tubing for the predator guards were donated by PSU and a local business. (Bob and Steve had a great time hauling 15 eight-inch PVC tubes that were 14-foot long in a six-foot long truck bed on a frigid January day!) Wood for the boxes was donated by the Southeast Kansas Recycling Center.



Fabio is doing a Master's study of small mammals in the area's old strip mines. Natalia will eventually report her findings at a chapter meeting, and many of the pole-mounted bluebird boxes with predator guards will be for sale to raise funds for the chapter.

Keep those bird feeders stocked this time of year. The late winter does not offer much food for birds. Once spring brings on insects, most species of birds will be able to sustain themselves.

Sightings.....



North American SWANS



Trumpeter swan
Note black bill



Tundra swan
Note yellow spot on bill



Mute swan
From Europe
Note red bill

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

Stella Eagle Days by Mavis Benner

Missouri is a winter hangout for eagles and Stella is a hot spot in the winter due to the clear-water stream flowing along the south edge of town. Eagles perch in wooded areas along the stream and soar and hunt in the open fields nearby. Several Sperry-Galligar Audubon members and friends met at Meadowbrook Mall on January 25, 2014.

The group, in caravan style, headed for Stella, MO. On arrival, the Missouri Conservation Department and master naturalist volunteers had some educational displays and handouts on the open area across from the village café and in front of the Senior Center. The display was on the spot where the Cardwell Hospital stood, (built in 1920) but no longer there. The display included handouts, quiz questions for youngsters and oldsters, crafts for kids, maps and tee shirts (of course with a bald eagle on the front). An eagle's nest was created in size and materials by the naturalists for the visitors to visualize the enormous size of an eagle nest. The nest was complete with an egg and paper mache' eaglet for inspection .

The group strolled a block or so south. Along the way a pair of golden crowned kinglets were spotted in brush along the road. After crossing the bridge over the stream, the conservation team had several spotting scopes in place for viewing several mature and immature bald eagles. Some eagles were circling overhead and were a beautiful sight for the spectators. Along with the eagles were several red-tailed hawks—soaring and sometimes being mistaken for our national symbol. Some of our group counted eight big birds and others spotted 15 birds in the area.

Boy Scouts were selling birdseed and the local church had hot chocolate and snacks and a place to sit and enjoy a video about (you guessed it) eagles. About 18 people from Sperry-Galligar Audubon participated in the eagle festival. Mark your calendar for next year. It is a nice winter outing!



**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.

