



# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2013 - 2015

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## BIRD MIGRATIONS

The simple definition for the word “migrate” is - to move from one place to another. That definition could apply to the winter shift of elk moving from higher to lower altitudes or the migration of monarch butterflies to Mexico. But, whatever the real definition of the word may be, there is probably nothing that exemplifies migrations more than the great lines of geese flying high overhead, honking and screaming in characteristic fashion. They are indeed moving from “one place to another” and they are visible and audible to even the most disinterested humans below. The ability to fly allows some bird species, e.g., geese, to move several hundred miles in a few



hours. Most birds migrate at night at an altitude of about a half-mile.

Arguably, the unavailability of food, not the cold winter temperatures, seems to be the most important reason to migrate. However, cold temperatures play a role in the accessibility of the food supply. Insects do not fly in temperatures less than 46 degrees; therefore, birds that feed primarily on flying insects - such as swallows and flycatchers - must move to warmer regions. Ice and snow blocks access to the food supply of waterfowl and ground feeding birds in northern regions. Therefore, at least one element in the bird migration puzzle seems to have an answer; i.e., to survive -- the accessibility to a food supply is not an option -- they must migrate.

But the entire migratory journey is not risk free. Besides natural mortality, there is a list of obstacles that must be avoided. Strong winds, storms, utility wires, a growing number of tall broadcasting towers, automobiles, polluted water, hunters, and the ingestion of lead shot are some. Perhaps the most critical aspect of mi-

gration is locating feeding stations. Long migrations without safe places for birds to refuel and rest along the way does not bode well for their welfare. The expenditure of energy during migrations is enormous. This is not a situation where birds die from gunshot or crashing into broadcast towers. An entire population in any given area must find food or they are at risk.

A recently harvested or plowed field, the mud flats of a drought stricken lake or flooded field, a concentration of small rodents, or a local or regional outbreak of cut worms or grasshoppers might become a feeding ground for a number of bird species. Such range in habitat types is as necessary

as the diversity of the birds that utilize them. For example: a loon must have a fairly large body of water, a nuthatch prefers the woodland, and the sandpipers and other shorebirds utilize the mud flats and shorelines of lakes and ponds. Conversely, ground dwelling, grassland species will not fare well in a woodland, and woodland species will not fare well on a prairie.

Good habitat provides food and shelter, which birds manage to locate. Almost like magic, the ripened fruit of mulberry, cherry, pear, and other fruit bearing trees attract birds. The hummingbirds will find the nectar producing flowers as well as your hummingbird feeder, and the finches and other seed eating species will locate your bird feeder. Migration is primarily about food and when made available the birds will find it -- whether it be in a wildlife refuge, open field or a backyard. As civilization continues to destroy such critical areas the welfare of many bird species is jeopardized. It is highly unlikely that the birds will change their behavior. Will we ever fully understand that?

**Bob Mangile**

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

**Feb 26 — “Down to Earth  
Habitat Management for  
Private Landowners” by  
Brad Stefanoni, Southeast  
Kansas Education Service  
Center. He will share his  
experience on small and  
large wetland projects. He  
will provide tips on how  
you can enhance your  
habitat.**

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

**Board Meeting Highlights  
Barb Robins, Secretary**

**Attending:** Mavis Benner, Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Barb Robins, Emmett & Ruth Sullivan.  
**Call To Order (Wayne):** 6:00 p.m.  
**Minutes:** Acknowledged.  
**Treasurer's Report (Liz):** Amounts in the three accounts are: CD, \$5,000; Savings, \$3,070.12; and Checking, \$5,001.90.  
**Publicity:** We had posters at PSU and the public library; notice of our meeting appeared in the Morning Sun and in e-mail reminders; and we were mentioned on KRPS and by Wayne to some PHS teachers at the Owl Prowl.  
**Future Programs:** Those of March and April are set. February's speaker will be Brad Stefanoni.  
**Newsletter:** Wayne acknowledged this issue's contributions by Diane, Bob, and Barb.  
**Birdseed Sale:** Made a total of \$975.69.  
**Bird Feeders:** Bob is getting wood to make ground feeders for next year's sale.  
**Field Trips:** February 7, 9:00 a.m. at the Neosho Wildlife Area; meet at 8:00 at the restaurant for breakfast if desired.  
**Request for Nature Reach Donation:** Delia walked us to the Nature Reach area to demonstrate the state of the herp cages, which are 20 years old and deteriorating. She requested SGAS's help in funding; and we agreed that we would pledge \$1,000, to be given when she procures the remainder of the required amount, contingent on approval by the membership. Meeting adjourned at 6:45.

**Financial Statement  
Liz Mangile, Treasurer**

**Jan 2015**

Beginning balance-----	\$4565.07
<i>Credits</i>	
Yearly credit for National Audubon-----	\$ 447.75
1 Local and 1 National Membership-----	\$ 35.00
National Audubon Credit for 1 membership----	\$ 20.00
Total-----	\$ 502.75
<i>Debits</i>	
Newsletter-----	\$ 10.92
National Audubon Membership-----	\$ 20.00
Total-----	\$ 30.92
Ending balance-----	\$5036.90

**THANK YOU, Mavis Benner and Megan Corrigan, FOR THE GREAT REFRESHMENTS.**



**January Meeting Presenter  
Rick Hines**



Stepping over rainbow-colored crabs, napping sea lions, and nesting blue-footed boobies. Swimming with penguins and iguanas. Observing finches using tools to feed. Saddle-shaped tortoises. Even if these improbable activities and critters are never personally experienced, almost everyone can

identify them as happening in the Galapagos Islands, off the coast of Ecuador. Rick Hines, board member of the Kansas Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, among other things, took us there virtually in his presentation, "Galapagos: Darwin's Enchanted Islands."

Rick gave us an extensive "backstory" of Charles Darwin's upbringing, his early education as a minister having a strong interest in science, and how he arrived in Galapagos as ship geologist on the HMS Beagle. It is difficult to believe that his theory of natural selection and the publication, "On the Origin of Species", were based on this single voyage.

It is always exciting to see photographs of the Galapagos tortoises and hear about their habits and breeding at the Darwin Research Station on the main island. Of course, it is disturbing to be reminded that they were almost extirpated by sailors' using them for food and introducing plant-devastating goats and egg-eating rats to the islands. (Although some subspecies have disappeared, efforts are being made to breed and restore the remaining ones to their original islands.)

Rick brought home the point that the islands are a showcase of examples of adaptation; each island has a unique habitat and therefore has engendered species adaptations. We are familiar with many of the species shown and know many of them locally—grasshoppers, cormorants, finches, owls, hawks, flycatchers, herons, warblers—but the knowledge that each of these has evolved into subspecies unique to individual islands of the Galapagos does evoke a sense of wonder. Where else in the world can one see iguanas slipping into the ocean or thirteen different shapes of finch beaks?

We thank Rick for bringing a bit of the equator to a cold Pittsburg evening.



Barb Robins

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING**

**Birds:** Pintail, Green-winged Teal, 55 eagles at Stella's Eagle Days. President Wayne Bockelman announced the Eco-Meet at Greenbush. Our chapter will award a total of \$400 for scholarships to the winners. We made \$975 at this year's birdseed sale, and Bob Mangile thanked all who contributed and helped.

Delia Lister of Nature Reach explained her need to buy replacement cages for the reptiles and asked us to contribute. Wayne reported on the state of our finances, indicating that we had ample resources. He then called for a member vote to pledge \$1,000 contingent on her receiving the remainder from other sources; the vote was overwhelmingly in favor.

There will be a field trip to the Neosho Wildlife Area on February 7. Meet there at 9:00 a.m. or at the St. Paul café at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast, if desired. Bob announced that Wayne and Megan have earned their 100-bird pin.

## Always Something to See When Outdoors

With the sun to our backs there appeared to be a thin bank of snow across the water on the far shore. But on this unseasonably warm Saturday, the only "snow" there could be were snow geese. It could hardly have been a more beautiful February morning, and it's sad to think of non-birders who have no excuse to get up early to go stand in the woods.

On February 7, Sperry-Galligar and Parsons Audubon visited the Neosho Wildlife Area with Andrew Burnett acting as our expert guide. Our chapter members may remember Andrew's presentation on purple martins last year. On this trip we were able to drive through usually-locked gates, making a large loop along dikes with restricted access.

The most magnificent view of the snow geese was their flight. Huge numbers of them circled the sky, at times almost directly above us, spiraling down as they came in for a landing. With hands reaching to the sky we laughed as we tried to count their numbers. Let's see, 100, 200, 300..., maybe a thousand someone offered. Mixed with the black-tipped white wings were quite a number of a darker phase. "Some folks call them Blue Geese," Andrew told us.

Besides the snows there were many mallards, a white-fronted goose, several ring-billed gulls. But we were really looking for eagles. We were not disappointed. Our first sighting of a bald eagle was one sitting in a treetop across the water. This one was immature and had not yet developed its white head. Andrew's spotting scope helped us zoom in for a good look. Before long we saw many more, including mature adults. They displayed varying degrees of patience as a large group of observers gathered to get a closer look. At one point we saw five eagles flying above the treetops within our view.

It's still early February, and we're likely to see more real snow this year. But on these warm winter days we're being given it's so nice to grab the binoculars and feel the sun for a while.

-- Wayne Bockelman



### Sightings.....



Watch and listen for our early frogs.



Western chorus frog  
Call: running fingers on comb



Northern spring peeper  
Call: peeps



Southern leopard frog  
Call: chuckles



On a January 17, 2015 trip to Columbia, MO, Cindy Ford and I had the opportunity to tag along with a great birder, (Lee Elliott) on a field trip to Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area. We were able to view a few eagles, a few northern shovelers, a

single horned lark, a great blue heron and thousands upon thousands of mallard ducks. The highlight of the trip for me was watching a mallard duck absolutely devour what appeared to be young bullfrog (or something similar). I couldn't believe my eyes at first, but sure enough, several sources I read said ducks would take this type of prey if given the chance. I imagine the frog was a little cold to even attempting to get away. You never know what you will learn on any given day!

Delia Lister



Birding is good even in a snowy woods.



**See what happens when you lie to mama!**

Bob Mangile contributed this cartoon showing a raccoon family and their relative, a coati mundi. Bob, did you really see this in your back yard?

**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**

Explore the world of birds with Audubon's completely re-imagined website. You'll find the compelling stories and stunning photographs that you've come to expect from *Audubon* magazine along with new daily content offerings and a wealth of web-exclusive material.

Audubon's new [mobile-friendly bird guide](#) features exclusive bird descriptions from pre-eminent bird author Ken Kaufman and illustrations from David Allen Sibley.

[Simple instructions and testimonials](#) from birders such as Jonathan Franzen and Jane Alexander make it easy to get into the world of birds.

Find out about [Audubon's on the ground conservation work](#) throughout the Americas.

[Get involved with Audubon](#) in your local community. We hope you'll agree that conservation has a whole new look.

Find this site at [Audubon.org](http://Audubon.org)

Diane McCallum has published her third novel, *In the Shadows*. Ask her about how to get a copy.

**FIELD TRIP:** Stefanoni's restored wetland habitat on Saturday, Feb 28. Get details at the February meeting. Come along to see great bird habitat.



**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.

