



NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2013 - 2015

President:

Wayne Bockelman

Vice President:

Megan Corrigan

Secretary

Barb Robins

Treasurer

Liz Mangile

Newsletter Editor

Cindy Ford

cford@pittstate.edu

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

Mar 26 — “Biology of the Genus, *Stalia* (Bluebirds) by

Larry Herbert.

Larry earned a Master’s Degree in Biology at Emporia State University, taught biology at Liberal Community College, and is a member of several ornithological organizations. He has done research on bluebirds and brown creepers.

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

March 2015

VOLUME 2015 ISSUE 3

Short-eared Owls

Bob Mangile

Five of the ten species of owls found in Kansas occur to the north or west of our area. Of the five species that occur in extreme southeast Kansas only four of them are likely to be seen or heard year around: the great horned owl, barred owl, eastern screech owl and barn owl. A fifth species, the **short-eared owl, *Asio flammeus***, was once a regular nester in Kansas until the 1930’s but with the destruction of prairie habitat it now breeds farther north but migrates south during winter.

This medium-sized owl, so named for its short ear tufts (see photo – right) - that may or may not be visible - is found on every continent in the world except Australia and Antarctica. They nest and roost on the ground. Winter roosts are often comprised of many individuals and their regurgitated pellets can be seen scattered throughout the roost area. They become



Photo taken during the day Febr. 1, 2015 about 10 miles northwest of Farlington, KS by Janelle Cowen. Note the ear tufts.



Photo taken at dusk by Donna Smith at location of our field trip. Note the facial disc to help catch the sound of their prey.

active near dusk (crepuscular) but often hunt during the day. They primarily prey on rodents, especially voles, but will eat other small mammals, birds and insects.

On March 8, 2015 twelve Sperry Galligar Audubon birdwatchers ventured afield to view this species at the Shawnee Trail Conservation Area just across the KS/MO state line. As dusk approached we saw 15 to 20 short-eared owls as they popped up from their prairie roosts to begin their nightly foraging. We observed their distinctive unsteady moth-like flight (see photo - left) as they coursed over the prairie but no one heard the characteristic “bark” they are known to produce during flight. ###

Board Meeting Highlights Barb Robins, Secretary

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

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

Minutes (Barb): Read and accepted.

Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance of \$5,069.06; this includes \$447.75 received from the national organization.

Next Meeting: "Biology of Bluebirds" by Larry Herbert; April will be on Monarch butterflies.

Publicity: Posters at PSU, PHS, PPL, newspaper notices in the Morning Sun and Joplin Globe, e-mail reminders.

Refreshments: Cynthia Pfannenstiel and Donna Smith.

Newsletter: Thanks were given to Bob, Delia, Megan, and Cindy.

Herpetarium Cages Funding: \$1,000 has been received from the College of Arts and Sciences and from the Biology Department; tomorrow might yield another contribution.

Ground Bird Feeders: Bob's working on it. He will make a prototype to see what type of screen will work best.

Field Trips: A trip to Brad Stefanoni's this Saturday to see his back yard will undoubtedly have to be postponed due to weather. Wayne wants to schedule a short-eared owl foray; it was recommended to call an impromptu one depending on conditions and bird cooperation.

Eco-Meet at Greenbush: We are giving \$100 to each of the four winners in the first-place team; do we want to add four \$20 national memberships? We agree it was a good idea but might want to seek another venue.

Other: Wayne again recommended that we write "job descriptions" of our responsibilities to help persons who will succeed us. Bob has started on his.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30.

Financial Statement Liz Mangile, Treasurer

February 2015

Beginning balance-----	\$5036.90
<i>Credits</i>	
Local Dues	\$ 70.00
<i>Debits</i>	
Newsletter-----	\$ 7.84
Ending balance-----	\$5099.06

THANK YOU, Cynthia Pfannenstiel and Donna Smith, FOR THE GREAT REFRESHMENTS.



February Meeting Presenter Brad Stefanoni



Pipe dreams really can come true, but don't try to fit a square peg in a round hole. Brad Stefanoni gave us lots of encouragement and caution in his presentation, "Down to Earth Habitat Management for Private Landowners." (Brad is Director of Procurement and Contract Services at Greenbush and holds a BS in Biology from PSU.) He and his family truly wanted to transform their two-acre property (named "Woods Edge") on the west edge of town into a habitat full of creatures and plants in harmony with each other in all seasons of the year.

Excitement became questioning and research, and Brad consulted experts in organizations including KWPT, NRCS, USFWS, Quail Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, and Pheasants Forever to determine (1) what he had, (2) what he wanted, and (3) what he needed. Brad discovered that not only would it require partnerships, money, and time; but major earth moving, knowledge and materials bartering, drawing plans, and much sweat equity.

We were taken through the steps of planning, filling, draining, planting, and discovering. Brad and his family not only worked on their backyard habitat but also on their inherited 80-acre crop field outside Parsons. They knew they wanted to eliminate row cropping and create a large wetland, tallgrass prairie, diversity, sustainable revenue, and an area for hunting. Both properties, due to organizations' help and their many hours of planning and labor, are being changed into areas meeting their goals and affording them countless opportunities to observe birds and other critters enjoying a natural habitat for raising their own families.

Thanks to the photography of Andra, Brad's wife, we were able to see "before" and "after" progress in the making. Their two sons were also observed working hard arranging dirt and setting plants. In all, thanks to various program contributions, Brad's share of the cost was only \$80, which illustrates his ingenuity in partnering with the necessary organizations and enlisting their help.

Fruits of the Stefanonis' labor in their back yard include a 2/3-acre wetland, a tallgrass prairie, natural gardens, bird feeding areas, raised beds, a bluebird trail, and an oasis for creatures and humans alike. Much wisdom and suggested questioning was shared by Brad to consider when metamorphosing a habitat dream into reality, and it all seemed to return to the square peg and the round hole..



HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING

Bird Sightings: Eagle on W. 20th Street, plentiful woodpeckers, brown creeper, many goldfinches, killdeer, purple finch, among others.

President Wayne Bockelman reported on the February 7 field trip to Neosho Wildlife Area. Many snowgeese, a few eagles, and a greater white-fronted goose were highlights. A trip this Saturday to Brad Stefanoni's backyard habitat was planned, but the weather will delay it till March. As always, the Shawnee Trail Conservation Area is the place to see short-eared owls and northern harriers; it is best to be spontaneous and e-mail members regarding the optimum time. Refreshments were provided by Cynthia Pfannenstiel and Donna Smith.

Always Something to See Outdoors or about the Outdoors

EARLY SPRING WALK

by Steve Ford

I lived in the mild Mediterranean climate of coastal southern California for a couple of years, and while I occasionally motorcycled to the cool mountaintops northeast of San Diego when I wanted a change of climate, I spent most of my time at sea-level. Balmy climate notwithstanding, the Wabash River is in my veins; I'm a Midwesterner and favor the distinct Midwestern seasons, especially their edges as those seasonal pages turn.

This year winter didn't bite us too hard until late, but that late February "gotcha" just served to put a little contrast and appreciation in our early spring. I was on a ramble in the woods to enjoy the first relatively warm day, and to look for shed deer antlers (I found one, but on my neighbor's land. Don't tell him!). It was still cool enough to harbor small patches of snow in the northern shadows, so I was a bit surprised to flush two woodcock. The first snow of early winter always surprises me, and the first woodcocks of early spring do too. They both seem too . . . well, early. My woodcock sighting led me to wonder if it were too early for their courting display, but that evening (March 5th) they indeed were "peenting" and twittering high over the meadow behind my barn. Mother Nature was stirring! Spring – early spring any-

way – was here. Along with the woodcock of that cool evening a lonely chorus frog called weakly. In just a few days, however, his colleagues joined him in a true chorus of "finger-over-the-comb". Along with these were leopard frogs and, in the right places (alas, not on my farm), spring peepers. Red-eared sliders began basking over water that



only a week before had been ice, and we started hearing the four-note "spring song" of the Carolina chickadees. We look forward to the rattle of cricket frogs, snores of crayfish frogs, trills of toads and tree frogs, and eventually the lazy "jug-o'-rum" of bullfrogs. Soon the leaves and the warblers that follow them; and soon the swallows, orioles, sunny plumage of the goldfinches, and all the songs and nests of summer.

The quickening steps of the early Midwestern spring – it ain't called "March" for nothing!



THROUGH MAY 17, EXHIBIT, MANHATTAN, KS

The dance of North American grassland grouse, from the impressive courtship of prairie chickens to the bizarre behaviors of sage grouse, are known to nature lovers as one of the most impressive wildlife displays in North America. "Save the Last Dance" at Flint Hills Discovery Center shares images by award-winning photographer, Noppadol Paothong, from his book "Save the Last Dance A Story of North American Grassland Grouse." The exhibition fosters knowledge and understanding of these birds and their diminishing habitats so future generations, too, can marvel at their grace and beauty. Admission charged. For more information, call (785) 5872726 or visit www.flinthillsdiscovery.org.

Diane McCallum found this announcement in the March/April 2015 issue of Journeys, a AAA publication.

Sightings.....



Those shorebirds sure look alike!



Woodcock



Common snipe



Lesser yellowlegs



Spotted sandpiper

Send your newsletter articles, bird sightings, and nature notes to C. Ford by Apr 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 _____
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**Events,
&
Miscellany**

WOODCOCKS

Yes, it is woodcock display season. Find a wet, wooded area, set up your chair nearby, and listen for the “peents” and twitterings as the birds fly up into the sky and drop. Check for these sounds around 7:30 in the evenings. They are very active right now.

Nature Reach has a new FACEBOOK page. Find out what is new at Nature Reach, what events are planned, and when summer day camp is scheduled.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIP

Join the group to tour Brad and Andra Stefanoni’s restored wetland habitat at the end of March. Keep watching your e-mails to get the date. Due to our changing weather and fickle spring, we are waiting for frogs to call and birds to land in the marshes. 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.

