



NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2013 - 2015

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September 2015

VOLUME 2015 ISSUE 6

MEET THE OSAGE ORANGE TREE by Bob Mangile

Though not considered critters, the Osage orange, *Maclura pomifera*, trees are known to most local residents as hedge apple. French explorers named the tree Bois D'Arc (pronounced bo-dark) - which means "wood of the bow" - because the American Indians they met used its springy branches as bows to launch their arrows. At the April 2012 SGAS meeting Sean Lynott gave a presentation about his hobby of making bows from Osage orange, or Bois D'Arc – wood of the bow.



Native to Texas and Oklahoma this tree has been introduced into many states including Kansas. Perhaps the most widespread historical use of the Bois D'Arc was in impenetrable thorny hedges that kept livestock from roaming. It made agricultural settlement of the prairies possible, led directly to the invention of barbed wire, and then provided most of the posts to which the wire was nailed. Its heartwood is the most decay-resistant of all North American timbers and is immune to termites. Osage orange fence posts (or hedge posts) last 30+ years. Squirrels tear apart their mature fruits to get at the highly nutritious seed.



These 30-50 foot high trees have long alternating shiny green oval leaves that terminate in a slender point. They are dioecious - which means that they have male and female trees – males produce pollen bearing male (staminate) flowers and females produce (pistillate) fruit bearing female flowers that are wind pollinated. (Trees that produce both male and female flowers on the same tree are called monoecious) Female trees will often produce fruit from unpollinated flowers, but such fruit contains no seeds. The 3-6 inch diameter yellowish-green compound fruits ripen in the fall and can weight over two pounds. Their sticky, bitter, milky juice may cause a skin rash. Branchlets growing in full sunlight will produce the sharpest thorns - which are modified twigs. Those in the shaded portions of the crown of mature trees may be thornless. Hedgerows comprised of these thorny trees offer refuge for various forms of wildlife.



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

Sept. 24 — "Birding & Volunteering at a National Wildlife Refuge" by Sperry-Galligar Audubon members Carolyn and Charles Chips. They will share their experiences volunteering at Santa Ana NWR near Alamo, TX. During their three-month (Feb.-Apr.) stay, they helped with banding birds, bird walks, and school groups.

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

Welcome back to another year of fine programs and congenial fellowship with avid birders, armchair birders, and those with a tentative interest in things natural. Or rather, welcome back again. This year we couldn't wait for our regular September meeting, and the summer didn't seem all that hot, so we started in August.

I hope you were able to catch Jordan Johnson's talk about diving with White Sharks in South Africa. Jordan's passion for her subject endeared her to the audience. That audience included many new faces, including students from both Colgan and Pittsburg High School. I counted the attendance at 67, a record for the last four years. It's even two more than for Napadol's multimedia presentation on the Sage Grouse, and that one included free fried chicken. Go figure!

One of the things that your local Audubon is

doing this year is sponsoring scholarships for high school students. The four first-place winners this fall at the local EcoMeet at Greenbush will each receive a \$100 college scholarship. One of the goals of Sperry-Galligar Audubon is to inspire an appreciation of the out-of-doors for a new generation of Audubonites.

Looking back, we had quite a fine year of programming last year. Delia Lister shared her summer sights from Alaska. Curator of Birds at Sedgwick County Zoo, Scott Newland, showed us that the military brought both defense and the brown tree Snake to Guam during WWII. John James Audubon himself made a visit, portrayed by Chris Pistole. The Galapagos Islands came to life in the photos and tales of Rick Hines. Brad Stefanoni showed us how to attract wildlife to our backyard or to those extra few acres we've set aside for wetlands. Just add water. **Cont. on p. 3.**

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 Sullivan. August.

Minutes: Read by Barb for April 30's board meeting. Approved.

Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance of \$3,751.19.

Extra Meeting: Wayne reminded us of an additional general meeting now scheduled for August 27, due to Delia's opportunity to arrange for Jordan Johnson to speak on her shark studies in South Africa.

Publicity: A short article appeared on the front page of the Morning Sun concerning our August 27 meeting, and an announcement was made on KRPS. Wayne initiated discussion on snail-mailing or e-mailing posters he designs to announce our general meetings. We decided that only e-mail attachments were necessary, and he will ensure that Christ Pistole (Wildcat Glades), Jeff Cantrell (Missouri Conservation Department), Jen Rader (Schermerhorn Nature Center), and Dana Hoisington (Prairie State Park) receive them, as well as our members.

Programs: Megan informed us that the September, October, and December programs are set; she has suggestions concerning later ones and welcomes more.

Herp Cages: Delia is waiting for some finishing touches, and we discussed having an open house in the Nature Reach area before or after a general meeting, and perhaps a short presentation on her activities at Nature Reach.

Pre-Meeting Photos: Wayne encouraged our continuing to show slides before the general meetings submitted by members. We discussed using submitted short videos or other media, and agreed to do so, but emphasized that oral commentaries aren't necessary.

Membership Report: Diane distributed a written summary of the last five years and explained the difference between membership and member statistics. It appears that our local memberships have averaged out to be similar and that meeting attendance remains approximately the same. We congratulated ourselves on program attendance; we were confident in concluding that our chapter draws more numbers than those with comparable populations.

Nature Reach Summer Camp: Delia reported that she had 14 first-through-third-grade children attend day camps in which she featured teaching gardens and various nature subjects. The overnight camps for older children didn't materialize due to low enrollment.

Field Trips: We will do a swift content on September 13, to be announced at the August 27 general meeting.

Chapter PO Box: Bob reported that yearly costs are now over \$100, and that the only mail we currently receive is junk. It was moved, seconded, and approved that we cancel the box subscription after it expiration in six months, and to announce that any membership checks can be sent to the Mangiles' home address.

Bird Houses: Bob has made a few wren houses, which we could sell for \$12. We have an ample supply of bluebird houses and ground feeders at \$15 for the birdseed sale.

May Meeting Presenter
Joe Neal

The Sperry-Galligar Picnic has become a popular annual event. The evening is well-attended by members and guests where everyone is treated with great salads, veggies, and desserts to go along with fried chicken. If you have not attended the picnic in May, plan to come this next spring.

The presenter for the May picnic was Joe Neal, who enthusiastically talked about the ivory-billed woodpecker and the red-cockaded woodpecker, both species having very interesting "stories". He also agreed to host a field trip to Prairie State Park the next day.

For details of the programs please see a write-up by Megan Corrigan on the "Bonus Page" of this newsletter.

Newsletter: Think ahead and submit items to Cindy. She can continue to publish a monthly newsletter if she receives enough submissions.

Sperry-Galligar Property: Is there interest on either end in volunteer projects? The answer seemed to be no.

Annual Report to National Office: Wayne will start working on it.

Chapter vs. National: Wayne prompted a discussion on whether we should mesh our chapter activities with those of the national organization. We reiterated that our attendance at programs was more than satisfactory and assumed that local members would not be in favor of getting involved in controversial ecological issues or administrative politics. The discussion turned to possible additional projects or efforts we could support on a local level, such as Nature Reach. Perhaps we could ask our chapter members for their preferences and/or suggestions. Steve will write an article in the newsletter soliciting members' involvement.

Bird Seed Sale: We will continue to hold it on the first Saturday in December. Bob raised the issue of truck rental costs; we don't have a better alternative at this time but will continue to entertain other possibilities.



Financial Statement
Liz Mangile, Treasurer
Sep 2015

Beginning balance	\$ 4,026.92
<i>Debits</i>	
Nails for nail gun	\$ 16.30
Reserve next year Picnic	60.00
Newsletter	7.30
Food & supplies for Picnic	103.75
Speaker fee	75.00
P.O. Box (half year)	49.00
Web page	159.98
<i>Credits</i>	
Membership credit from Nat. Audubon	\$ 130.00
Birdhouses, ant molts & groundfeeders	177.60
Ending balance	\$ 3,863.19

SPECIAL AUGUST PRESENTATION



Because of a timely opportunity, we were fortunate to have Jordan Johnson give us a special presentation, "Sharks: Why We Cannot Live Without Them." Jordan has had a lifelong interest in sharks and seized the opportunity to serve as an intern on an ecotourism diving boat with a shark cage off the coast of South Africa this summer. She was able to study and photograph sharks and other marine life.

Although a cage and bait were utilized to attract sharks, they were not fed by humans; they came to Seal Island to dine on their favorite cuisine. The great white sharks, of course, were the most thrilling. Jordan was able to observe certain individuals daily from the cage—they became familiar and were distinctive enough to receive names from the crew. Some of the general information Jordan gave us included the fact that they each had a different personality and that they can grow to 6.5 meters (the largest she saw was 4.2 meters). Sharks hunt by jumping vertically and nabbing prey such as seals on the first try.

Jordan emphasized the importance of sharks in the food chain and the overall circle of oceanic life. Since they are an apex predator, removal of them from the circle would result in an imbalance and overpopulation of lower species. The huge increase in the shark fin trade—killing a shark just for the fin to sell to restaurants for the preparation of a single bowl of soup—has resulted in the extinction of several species. Every day, approximately 273,972 are killed as a result of finning, which amounts to 100 million annually. Additionally, sport fishing kills more each year than commercial netting. Within the next century, all shark species could become extinct. Since white sharks cannot live in captivity, future human generations will never be able to see one. We viewed a short video showing the cruel and gory amputation of sharks' fins and other parts as they were hauled into fishing boats (once a fin is removed, the shark cannot grow another one and will die because it cannot maneuver to hunt).

Jordan made certain we understood the distorted spin the media put on the threat of sharks to humans. Contrary to the portrayal of sharks as demonic killing machines, the fact is that vending machines kill more people annually. Shark attacks on humans are usually a result of mistaken identity. A surfer with legs extended on a board can look like a seal from below.

What can we do to preserve shark species? Above all, we can educate ourselves; we can learn how seafood is caught, thereby becoming responsible consumers and refusing to buy or eat seafood caught by trolling, and refusing to eat endangered species. The SASSI organization website is a good source of information. We can talk to our families and friends about the importance of understanding and protecting sharks. Although Jordan gave us a less scary and savage version of "shark week" than cable TV, her passion and knowledge resulted in our enlightenment and appreciation of the shark's place in our world.

WELCOME BACK (continued from Page 1) We learned that Larry Herbert knows everything there is to know about bluebirds. The epic flying migration of monarch butterflies was described by the tag team of Karen Garver and Katherine Spigarelli. Finally, Joe Neal talked about saving the red cockaded Woodpecker. It has been a full year.

In addition, we updated our Constitution and Bylaws to reflect our evolving practices over the years. Instead of changing our behavior to conform to the laws, we changed the laws to conform to our behavior. We are, after all, pragmatists.

Looking forward, our schedule for the upcoming year is already filling up with fine new programs.

For the January meeting our very own Delia Lister has promised to give us an open-house of the renovated Nature Reach facilities next door on the third floor of PSU's Heckert-Wells, next to the mosasaur. (Have you ever seen the mosasaur?) In addition to her menagerie of critters, we will be able to see the new herpetology cages, the ones that Sperry-Galligar Audubon helped purchase, the ones that prevent her snakes from mixing with the general public. She will share secrets about things that Nature Reach does that we haven't even heard of. Stay tuned!

For the November-December meeting it's cassowaries. Maria Minnaar-Bailey stalks the largest bird you are never likely to see, and she does it in her delightful accent. Is it Aussie or is it Rhodesian? In October we have a presentation from Mike Rader, birder extraordinaire and father of our beloved, next-door-neighbor, Jen Rader, director of Galena's Schermerhorn Nature Center. Not since the presentation of Brad, husband of journalist Andra Stefanoni, have we reaped such benefit from nepotism. And next up, on Thursday, September 24th, our very own Carolyn and Charles Chips have returned from their travels long enough to talk about their summer as volunteer camp hosts and naturalists at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, about as far south as you can go in Texas without being in Mexico. They've seen birds we've never even heard of. What the heck is a grooved bill ani? Be there to find out.

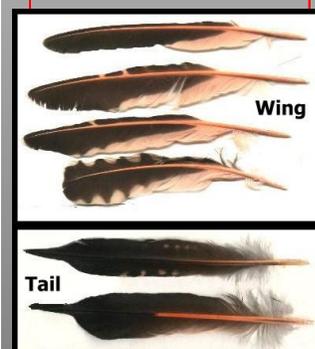
I'm looking forward to another year filled with fascinating programs, fabulous field trips, and furthering friendships with all of you.

Wayne Bockelman

Sightings.....



Bob's Feather Quiz



Ask Bob at the meeting to identify this bird to see if you know a "bird in the hand".

Did you guess the correct bird?

Send your newsletter articles, bird sightings, and nature notes to C. Ford by Oct 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
816 E. Atkinson
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762-0205

Please Print



Name _____
Address _____
City _____
Phone _____
e-mail address _____

& 
Events,
Miscellany

THANKS FOR THE GOODIES, Liz Mangile

Andra Stefanoni would like you to know that she has an outdoor blog www.atwoodsedge.net and an outdoor Facebook page, www.facebook.com/atwoodsedgelife? It sort of replaces my old "At Woods Edge" column I wrote for many years for The Morning Sun.

JOIN OZARK GATEWAY AUDUBON for Trip to RED SLOUGH

We want to remind you of our upcoming field trip to Red Slough Wildlife Management Area which is near Idabel in SW, OK. The trip will leave from the center on Wednesday, Sept. 16 and return in the afternoon of Sept. 18. On Sept. 16 we will be staying at the Wilhelminia Lodge located in the Queen Wilhelmina State Park in Arkansas. The reservation number there is [\(479\)394-2863](tel:4793942863). If you plan on attending please let our field trip coordinator, Dave Henness know by calling him at [\(417\)529-0830](tel:4175290830) or email at eagle3194@aol.com so he can coordinate carpooling. You will need to make your own room reservations.

To those who monitor Bluebird Houses in our three county region, please report your annual Bluebird fledgling numbers to Bob Mangile <rmangile@cox.net> (Tel: [620-231-3117](tel:6202313117)) by the end of September.

Please pay dues now.

 **Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society**
Newsletter
816 E. Atkinson
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.

BONUS PAGE

JOE NEAL SPEAKS AT MAY AUDUBON PICNIC



May 28th - About 45 members and friends attended the annual picnic. Our guest speaker for the evening was Joe Neal, co-author of *Birds of Arkansas*, a biologist retired from the USDA Forest Service, and currently a visiting scholar at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. When he walked in he said that he had heard a Warbling Vireo on his way in and since several of us were not familiar with that bird, he took us right out to the parking lot and helped us hear it and find it.

Mr. Neal offered new information about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker debate. In 2005 his colleague David Luneau caught a video of what he was sure was an Ivory-billed Woodpecker from a camera mounted on the front of a canoe. The quality was not the best and disagreement has been intense. However, since then, an old film of the extinct Imperial Woodpecker from Mexico has been discovered. The imperial Woodpecker was about the same size as the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and scientists have compared the two films, examining wing flap rate, also comparing the flap rate to that of Pileated Woodpeckers. The verdict, according to Mr. Neal is that the bird in the video shot from the front of the canoe has a flap rate identical to that of the Imperial Woodpecker, and quite different from that of the Pileated Woodpecker, leading more scientists to believe that, at least in 2005 one Ivory-billed Woodpecker was alive in Arkansas and caught on video.

After satisfying our curiosity on that topic, Mr. Neal mentioned a few other birds that are more definitely extinct. He noted that it has been 100 years since the death of the last Passenger Pigeon and more since the disappearance of the Carolina Parakeet. That the Passenger Pigeon could disappear was unfathomable, "as if I told you the starling was facing extinction" said Mr. Neal for comparison. Yet it happened, almost before people understood that it *could* happen. Luckily, there have been developments since then that make extinction a less likely outcome.

A major development occurred in 1973 when Richard Nixon signed the endangered species act. Since then, Sierra Club lawyers have been filing lawsuits on behalf of endangered species everywhere. Mr. Neal worked with the Forest Service in Ouachita National Forest, and his organization became the target of one of these lawsuits on behalf of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW).

RCW's nest only in living, mature pine trees that have red heart fungus, which softens the heart wood and allows the birds to excavate a cavity. Loggers were logging indiscriminately taking away the habitat of the RCW and numbers were decreasing dramatically. The Sierra Club lawsuit put a stop to that, and the Forest Service was put in a position of needing to come up with a plan to preserve the RCW population in Arkansas, but they also wanted to continue to allow sustainable logging, as is the mandate of the National Forests.

The forest service set aside a large portion of the center of the Ouachita National Forest where they began to study the RCW. Field biologists climbed fifty feet up treacherous ladders to peer into the nests of RCW's, count them, band them, and kick out interlopers like flying squirrels and rat snakes. They learned more about the RCW's behavior and habitat needs. RCW's live in family groups, one bird per tree in neighboring trees. Families include offspring from previous years who help with the parenting of the fledglings.

Two major strategies were found to be successful at increasing the RCW population in the Ouachita National Forest. The first was translocation. Individual RCW's with no chance of breeding in the next two years in their current location (offspring from previous years) were taken from other populations and incorporated into the population in Arkansas. Another strategy was to create habitat by inserting artificial cavities into existing trees. This allows RCW's to inhabit younger pine trees and those without red heart fungus. These wooden artificial cavities were made with steel front plates and pipes for entry holes to prevent Pileated woodpeckers from enlarging the entry holes and making them

uninhabitable for RCW's. Results from this two-pronged conservation effort have been heartening.

The Forest Service also recognized that RCW's thrive in open, well spaced pine forests, and have employed controlled burns as a management technique, in addition to allowing the harvesting of select non-cavity trees. Mr. Neal said that nobody in Arkansas wanted a repeat of the spotted owl drama, and in fact the way things worked out, loggers understand that the RCW is their friend because as long as RCW's need open pine forest, there will be a need for loggers to thin out the forest.

The open pine forest has led to an increase not only in the numbers of RCW's but also Northern Bobwhite, and many other plant and animal species. In closing, Mr. Neal spoke of other successful conservation efforts spurred by the Endangered Species Act. He noted the success of efforts to revive populations of Bald Eagles and Whooping Cranes. As long as people care and engage with conservation efforts, he said, progress can be made.

On May 29th two members attended a rainy field trip with Joe Neal, co-author of *Birds of Arkansas*, to Prairie State Park. Unbeknownst to any of us, a credible sighting of a Crested Caracara had taken place the day before near the Visitors Center. We learned about this from Brad Jacobs, author of *Birds in Missouri*, who was driving around trying to confirm the sighting. The lure of a Crested Caracara sighting in Missouri, coupled with the rain, led us to abandon our plan to bird the Sandstone Trail. Instead we headed over towards the visitor center to look for the bison herd, which is where naturalist Dana Hoisington told us the bird had been seen the previous day.

On our way to climb a low hill for a better view of the distant bison herd, Joe was pleased to hear and see several Henslow's Sparrows. Apparently Henslow's Sparrows are nearly gone from Arkansas, and Peterson's describes them as "Scarce, local, secretive." Dana Hoisington said they are not scarce at all in Prairie State Park, and that people come from other states hoping to see one for their life list. He said they prefer areas that have not been burned recently so they can have mature ground cover for their nest. How cool to have this bird just a few miles away from Pittsburg!

We spent a while at the top of the hill peering through binoculars looking for any black, two-foot tall bird with a white head, but to no avail. Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons, Green Herons and some crows flew by. A Yellow-breasted Chat performed some aerial acrobatics, and we were surrounded by meadow-larks and dickcissels, but no caracaras, crested or otherwise.

When we got to the Visitor's Center, Brad Jacobs, who had been searching in another direction, came back very excited to play a recording he had made that morning and asked Joe Neal if he could identify the bird that made the sound. It was a barely audible sound, and Joe, who is a remarkable ear birder, took a few guesses, but couldn't identify the bird. Brad announced that the sound came from a Dickcissel and Joe was impressed. Neither had ever heard a Dickcissel make a sound like that before.

Overall, despite the weather, nobody was disappointed in the day. Even though we didn't find a Crested Caracara, it was fun to be in the company of such expert birders who thought that they had heard every possible Dickcissel vocalization when they discovered a new one. Nature is amazing.

MEGAN CORRIGAN