



NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2015 - 2017

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GORILLAS IN GLACIER BAY, AK

No one forgets the moment they first saw the ocean, marveled in the sheer power of the water and tasted the salt in the air. For student, Katie McMurry, it was a part of an experience that has forever changed her. "For me, Alaska wasn't just the wildest place I've ever visited, but it was also the most beautiful and diverse. Exploring the tidal pools and following a pod of whales is something classroom ecology courses just can't compete with."

John Muir said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe". There is perhaps no better place to witness this than Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska. Students on this trip were engaged in every way possible. No amount of classroom lecture time could compare to the education they received in just a week. These students will most likely never forget what Devil's Club looks like in the field, and why they should avoid it. They will never forget the taste of handpicked blueberries along the trail or the low thunderous sound of the Margerie Glacier calving into the water. They were able to see how, thanks to Mr. Muir, the modern American conservation movement really began in the glaciers of this park. In the classroom, students learn terms and concepts like succession and climate change. However, by traveling up Glacier Bay they were able to observe successional changes from the tiniest beach strawberries to the mighty spruce-hemlock forest and everything in between. They were able to see direct evidence for climate change from one of the wildest places on the planet. They were able to explore the interface and interdependency between both marine ecosystem and terrestrial ecosystem. They had the opportunity to visit with and hear from professionals in the field. Upon returning, student Tayler Frazier said "I have witnessed first-hand what my degree can do! I can finally explain to my family what I want to do with my degree!"

In addition to learning in the field, students were also able to connect with people who live in the small community of Gustavus just outside the park as well as see how the native Tlingit people survived and thrived off of the land. Many of the students noted the difference in attitude of the people compared to other places they had been or lived—they noticed that the residents of Gustavus were so much more connected to the land and treated it with an incredi-

bly high regard. The sense of community in this little town, not connected to any other by a road, was something incredibly special. The required reading for this trip was a book written by Gustavus resident author, Kim Heacox. We were lucky enough to have him join us one evening during the trip. Sitting around a campfire with guitar in hand, he told stories and even sang a few songs.

At this point, you may be asking yourself-- how did a bunch of PSU Gorillas end up in Alaska? The answer is, it took a partnership. A few years ago I met a very enthusiastic PSU Biology alum, Dan Van Leeuwen. He and his wife (also a PSU alum), Dr. Sonya Culver, both share an appreciation for getting students in the field. They offered to host a group of students at no cost if I could work on logistics and recruiting. This generosity made a trip that would have cost thousands of dollars down to just \$1700.00. Considering many study abroad trips are \$3000.00 or more, this seemed like a much more reasonable cost. I was also lucky enough to have some funding by friends of the University to cover part of the cost of a planning trip for myself in 2014. This trip was incredibly valuable in determining logistical hurdles and what activities were possible with a group.

So, what happens when you take a bunch of Kansas students to Alaska? Pure magic. As a college instructor, very little in my professional career has brought more fulfillment than to witness college students, some of whom have never seen the ocean, start exploring tide pools with child-like enthusiasm—and diving into field guides to find answers to questions raised by said exploration. Watching those joy-filled, teary eyes glued to pods of humpback whales feeding was worth every bit of extra time spent planning and preparing for the trip. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, these students were transformed. They had the time of their lives, and learned by doing.

In the future I hope that you will consider supporting immersive and highly educational trips such as this for our students. These unforgettable experiences help to set our students apart from everyone else. These trips provide our students opportunities that bring to life what they learn in the classroom throughout their time at PSU. They provide clarity for future career pathways, help them discover more about themselves, and develop global awareness.

Delia Lister

October Meeting
Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Yates 102
Pittsburg State Univ
****Presentation****

Oct 27 — "Northern Saw-whet Owls: Their Migration and Occurrence in the South-Central US", by Mitchell Pruitt, researcher, University of Arkansas. Prior to the beginning of this research in 2014, the Northern Saw-whet Owl was a species that was virtually unknown to Arkansas.

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

Board Meeting Highlights
Barb Robins, Secretary

Attending: Mavis Benner, Wayne Bockleman, Megan Corrigan, Cindy & Steve Ford, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Barb Robins, Emmett & Ruth Sullivan. Guest: Christine Brodsky.
Call To Order (Wayne): 6 p.m..
Minutes for the August Planning Meeting: Approved.
Treasurer's Report (Liz): Checking account balance of \$5,294.30
Next Month's Program: "Finding Saw-whet Owls in Arkansas" by Mitchell Pruitt from Univ. of Ark.
Future Programs: Megan and Mavis have some good ones in mind, including mushrooms and more herps.
Publicity: More announcements than usual on KRPS, posters on campus and PPL, one small item in Morning Sun.
Refreshments: Liz and Mavis. Signup sheet will be passed around tonight.
Field Trips: Swift count had a good human and bird turnout. Wayne and Megan were excited about the Prairie Fire Museum in KC and suggested we organize a future foray there.
Dues are due. Wayne will ask the general membership if they want to receive text messages.
Facebook Page: Mavis is constructing one for us and will manage it.
Newsletter: We had a five-page issue this time. Wayne congratulated all on contributions and called for submissions to October's issue.
Curtains for the Natural History Reserve: Wayne will bring it up at tonight's general meeting.
Diane's New Novel: She has successfully launched her fourth, *The Other Side*.
Fishing Line Disposal System at College Lake: Since non-fish critters are being hooked, Delia would like to see us put some money toward such an effort. It was moved, seconded, approved that our chapter contribute toward several educational signs and disposal system, amount to be determined later. Meeting adjourned at 6:50.

Financial Statement
Liz Mangile, Treasurer
Oct 2016

Beginning balance-----	\$5274.53
Credits	
Birdhouses-----	\$ 30.00
National Dues-----	\$ 20.00
Local Memberships-----	\$195.00
Total-----	\$ 245.00
Debits	
Newsletter-----	\$ 10.23
National Payment for Dues-----	\$ 20.00
Total-----	\$ 30.23
Ending balance-----	\$ 5489.30

September Meeting Presenter: Ken Middick



Who doesn't like turtles? If there are such misguided souls, they weren't present in the substantial audience of turtle fans at our September meeting. Even if turtles are slow, ungainly, don't perform tricks and aren't cuddly, they have legions of admirers. Our speaker, Ken Middick, Master Naturalist and staff member of Wildcat Glades Conservation Audubon Center, helped satisfy our hunger for all things turtle by showing us live specimens, preserved parts, and giving us true and mythical turtle data.

Kansas has 13-14 species of turtles, and 85% of the state's numbers are found in our corner. Our turtles can be divided into three groups: aquatic, soft-shelled aquatic, and hard-shelled land. The dinosaur-like alligator snapping turtle is the largest hard-shelled aquatic, and the stinkpot is the smallest. (Ken had a live baby stinkpot specimen, which some of us termed downright cute.) Soft-shelled turtles do not have the hard, scaled carapace that hard-shelled ones do; theirs is more of a leather-like coating. The spiny softshell would be one example. The hard-shelled land turtles, commonly called tortoises, comprise two species: the ornate box (Western box), and the three-toed box (Eastern box). The ornate is, of course, our state reptile.

Turtles can live from 55 to 100 years that we know of. They mature in 2 to 8 years and can have a somewhat elaborate courtship, which usually consists of bumping and attempting to upend each other. Females lay their eggs in a nest that they dig, and higher than average temperatures usually yield females. The same nest usually produces all of one gender. Baby turtles are completely on their own after hatching. Born in the fall, they spend the winter in the nest. They are true hibernators and are subject to predation by larger mammals, insects, birds, and fish.

Habitats for turtles consist of woodlands, brush fields, grasslands, prairies, glades, and water. They need Vitamin D, so if in the water they can often be found basking on rocks and logs. Like most of our wildlife, turtles are losing their habitat due to swamp and marsh draining, water pollution, stream channelization, and the destruction of forests.

All but three species, the soft shells and the common snapper, are protected in our state. Shooting all turtles is prohibited; and it is illegal to capture, sell or trade turtles for the pet industry. Help protect them by not driving over them. Respect them but don't fear them; they won't bite unless picked up. But remember: they are wild animals, and they do bite!

Ken dispelled some turtle myths, including the amusing one that if they bite, they won't let go till it thunders. They do not predict rain by crossing the road and supposedly going to a higher spot. And they can't be forced out of their shell by applying hot water.

Surely everyone left Ken's lecture a greater turtle appreciator. Even if all the live specimens were not cute, they were handled (and petted) many times.

Barb Robins

THANKS to Liz Mangile and Mavis Benner for refreshments.

SPERRY-GALLIGAR Audubon Happenings

SPERRY-GALLIGAR MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

President Wayne Bockelman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year, with a special welcome to a number of Colgan students. For the benefit of new attendees, Wayne briefly explained our chapter's activities and its newsletter publication. He invited everyone to join our local chapter and the national organization as well. We are starting a Facebook page, with Mavis Benner as designer and

manager. Also, we will experiment with sending text messages.

The Natural History Reserve needs curtains, and Wayne will ask for volunteers soon to help with those. A refreshment volunteer signup for the year is being passed around. Mary Packard received her 200 -bird pin. Bob Mangile explained the process of earning various pins (see the Sperry-Galligar Audubon website.) Wayne announced that Marvin Smith, long-time and avid birder, passed away this week.

Barb Robins

PRAIRIE JUBILEE AT PRAIRIE STATE PARK

Missouri Wildlife and Parks facilitated the Prairie Jubilee on September 24, 2016, an event held every other year at the Prairie State Park north of Mindenmines, MO or east of Mulberry, KS. Nearly 900 people attended the event. Four Sperry-Galligar Audubon members volunteered to assist. Visitors from across the state and from as far as Paraguay attended. A stage and large canopy were shelters from the almost 90 degree temperatures. There were various group displays including a native plant sale, a display of very lifelike snakes of Missouri, the Joplin junior naturalists displayed an informative booth with stages of the Monarch butterfly. The kids enjoyed the face painting booth and proudly wore bison or other species painted on their cheeks all day. Three wagons with hay bales served to transport visitors out to the prairie to view the bison, up close and personal. However by midday the bison were not cooperating and found a slough to lie down to snooze, off the trail so the wagons were unable to get close for viewing. Visitors enjoyed a prairie ride and were not overly disappointed. Pulled bison sandwiches and desserts were available for lunch. Big Foot was in the crowd talking to kids and adults. There was a circle to hike around with an old schoolhouse, a covered wagon group, various kid game demonstrations from native Americans and settlers with hands on participation. Performing on the stage was a music group, a story teller and Audubon's own past officer, Megan Duffy Yates explaining falconry and displaying her red-tailed hawk and American kestrel that she has trained for hunting. There was a bison chip throwing contest also for the youngsters. The day concluded at 4 pm and visitors left with sunburns and smiles.

Mavis Benner



Photo by Emmett Sullivan

St. Mary's-Colgan Students Benefit

For many years now, I've had the pleasure of offering new knowledge and experience to my students by encouraging them to come to an Audubon meeting. Many of the topics that are presented in these meetings dovetail beautifully with the objectives I have for these students. Although I was unable to attend last month's meeting about our native turtles, I encouraged my students to come and got a great response! Over 30 St. Mary's-Colgan students enjoyed not only enlightenment about some fascinating creatures, but also your infectious enthusiasm for our natural world and your warm welcome (not to mention your cookies! I apologize for that.) In reading their written reports of the meeting, my appreciation for the quality of the Audubon presentations and for the mem-

bers that make learning so much fun only deepened. It's not just the information that's important to my students, although that is substantial. More importantly, it is the witness that each person gives to them that shows them how to live a life where we can appreciate and care for the natural world. I am deeply grateful for the impact you have made on my students, not just in this instance but through the years. Following are some quotes from their reports that summarize this impact: "Thank you so much for educating me on turtles and letting me hold them!!" "The people were so nice, especially the vice president, she was smiling the whole time!" "I liked how they welcomed us students and made us feel like we were a member there!" "I thought the Audubon meeting was actually very interesting and will definitely go again!" So, thank you, fellow Audubonites! Donna Maus, Biology teacher, St. Mary's-Colgan H.S.

Sightings.....



Spectacular
Fall
Color



Send your newsletter articles, bird sightings, and nature notes to C. Ford by Nov. 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 Ave
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762

Please Print



Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

e-mail address _____

MISCELLANY



BEEKEEPING 101 by Delia Lister

After receiving a generous donation this summer, I was finally able to try my hand at beekeeping. My student intern, Katie McMurry, and I spent several mornings learning from our bee mentor, Dan Mosier. I knew there would be much to learn about beekeeping, but I did not anticipate how much time I would spend just watching the bees! One of my first observations was that of a worker bee who was dragging out the body of another dead bee. She looked like a fussy housewife cleaning before company. Another day I watched a wasp try to enter the hive. It was quickly "taken care of" by a dozen or more bees. I don't know how many times I just sat and watched various other bee behaviors from orienting themselves to the hive or the watching them collect pollen from the many flowers here at the Reserve.

I also did not realize how much I would worry about them. Was I feeding them enough? Where is the queen? Is this swarming behavior? I specifically remember calling Dan about 9:30pm one evening worried that they were swarming when, in fact, they were just cooling themselves off from the hot day. This is something every "newbee" can relate to.

Another lesson we had to learn was that you can do everything right and still not be successful your first year. After months of hard work, we discovered something was wrong with the hive, and within about 3 days the hive went from thriving to collapsing. We still haven't been able to quite figure out what exactly happened. We noticed a few dead pupa a few weeks ago, but didn't think much of it. That *could* have been a sign of an infestation of varroa mites, but it could also have just been the result of a cool weekend. We also heard reports of some late pesticide spraying, and it is certainly possible that our bees visited an area that had been sprayed. Or maybe it was a combination? Either way, we will most certainly try our hands at bee keeping next spring. After speaking with the state honeybee expert, I felt a little better about the failure. Thanks, Dan and other keepers in the area.

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Newsletter

816 Atkinson Ave.

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.)

7:00 pm to 9 pm, in Room 102, Yates Hall.

PSU Campus, Pittsburg, KS.

Refreshments served. 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.

Extra Photos from Members



2016 Summer group of students and community members on the PSU educational trip to Glacier Bay, Alaska, hosted by Delia Lister and Dan Van Leeuwen.

(Photos by Delia Lister)



Delia Lister and Cindy Ford deep in the lotus plants on the Ford Farm. American lotus is reputedly the largest flower in North America.

(Photo by Steve Ford)

Young broad-headed skink found under Bob Mangile's back porch this summer.

(Photo by Bob Mangile)



New hatching Broad-head Skink found tangled in spider webs in my Basement on July 28, 2016. Note the tail shows areas where webs were wound. Bob Mangile