



# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2017 - 2019

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## Connecting Young People to Nature

As a child growing up in the 70's, spending time outside was part of my everyday experiences. We did all sorts of things outside – fished, camped, built tents with my mom's old quilts, played house under the mulberry trees with mulberries for tea parties; made mud pies, dandelion "curls" and chains, and clover rings and crowns; painted rocks with pokeberry juice, collected feathers, climbed trees, watched sunsets and stars, and explored for miles around. My grandma had a pecan farm, and we spent whole days outdoors picking up pecans and being a part of nature. Our family had a large garden and raised steers and rabbits for meat, and we had outdoor chores to do every day. We knew where all the wild fruit grew, and when it was ready to be picked. We spent countless summer afternoons just being outside doing nothing at all! My whole family nurtured my love of the outdoors. My education at PSU with Dr. Triplett, Dr. Johnson, and the Drs. Ford helped me to grow in experience and knowledge of the outdoors.

However, I learned after being a Biology teacher for just a few years that the experiences I had were rare for today's children. It seems that, for one thing, they have a lot less free time than I did. Their time is pretty structured; even their free time after school and during the summer is spent in doing things that, although good in their own right, don't leave much time for just being outdoors. The cumulative experiences that most of us reading this have had, that we all assume is just common knowledge, is not so common among the youth of today. Here's a sampling of some comments I've heard from teaching in RURAL or SUBURBAN schools along the way:

"You mean the white puffy ball and the yellow flower are the same plant?"

"So, pecans grow on trees? If I crack it open and eat it, will it taste like pecans from the store?"

"Won't earthworms give you worms?"

"I never knew that different birds have different songs!"

"I give up – what kind of tree makes acorns?"

Keep in mind that these are comments from smart HIGH SCHOOL students, who are already filtering their comments as much as possible so they won't appear "stupid" in the eyes of their peers. Also, keep in mind, if you had no one to teach you, and if you had no time to spend outdoors, how would you know the things you know and take for granted today? Overall, our children in Kansas know more about killer whales and grey wolves (from TV shows) than they do about red-tailed hawks or coyotes.

So, in addition to trying to teach to all the standards set by the state of Kansas (most recently, the NGSS standards), it has always been a priority and a distinct joy to teach my students about the natural world around them. There's so much to be gained from this! We humans are thrilled by beauty and a glimpse into the intricate inner workings of living things – all within reach just by studying Biology, as we all know! As a Catholic Christian, I have a specific vocation to lead my students to God, and to give them a chance to know God as He reveals Himself, in part, through His creation. And I have found that activities outdoors such as our field trips and participation in Ecomeet gives my students so many opportunities for leadership, friendship, fun, and a desire to be good stewards of our natural resources. Luckily, I have a lot to offer them because there are people like you, good Audubonites, who offer the educational talks, the judging at Ecomeet, and the extra help in parks like the Southeast Kansas Nature Center. Thanks for all you have done to support our youth through the years, and for being such a welcoming group for my students! You really are making a difference.

**Donna Maus,**  
**St. Mary's-Colgan Catholic High School**

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

March 29..."Habitat Associations of the Broad-headed Skink in Kansas", by Zack Cordes, Biologist, Ecological Services, KDWP&T. Little is known of the habitat requirements for the Broad-headed skink, a state threatened species. Zack will discuss a project to assess the species' distribution and ecology with the main objective of developing a recovery plan for the Broad-headed Skink.

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

## 6:00 Board Meeting Highlights

### Megan Corrigan, Secretary

**Attending:** Wayne Bockelman, Christine Brodsky, Megan Corrigan, Cindy & Steve Ford, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum

**January Minutes:** Read and approved.

**Treasurer's Report (Liz):** \$8355.86.

**Refreshments:** Thank you to Mary Tersinar and Mary Kilcher for February refreshments

**March program:** "Habitat Associations of the Broad Headed Skink in Kansas," Zack Cordes, biologist, KDWPT. Zack will discuss a project to assess the species' distribution and ecology with the main objective of developing a recovery plan for the state-threatened Broad-headed Skink.

**DeGruson memorial:** In January, board members and members of the DeGruson family visited the new KDWPT building at the old quail farm, met with Dave Jenkins, and agreed it would be fitting to use funds to improve the habitat surrounding the building. **MOTION PASSED:** Appropriate \$1000 for habitat improvement of the area around the KDWPT building, which may be matched by grant funds

**Benches:** Discussed whether a bench might be appropriate at the KDWPT building. Also noted that the bench Sperry Galligar donated at Wilderness Park is the worse for wear and could use attention. Bob will check in to possibilities.

**Possible Field Trips:** The possible trip to Cherokee Lowlands has been postponed until fall because they are renovating the marsh.

On April 28<sup>th</sup> Burroughs Audubon from Kansas City will go birding at the Neosho Wildlife Area at 5:30 am and we could join them. More info later.

**Birdhouses:** We are down to our last bluebird houses and will need to plan a day to make more.

**Pittsburg Backyard Nature Project:** This project, headed by Katie McMurray and partially funded by Sperry Galligar Audubon, was presented in a poster session at the Kansas Natural Resources Conference in February.

## Financial Statement

### Liz Mangile, Treasurer

### March 2018

Beginning balance-----\$8421.36

Credit

Bird houses, Tshirts and 2 local and 1 Nat. Memb....\$161.00

Debits

Newsletter-----\$ 5.50

Money for fishing line holders-----\$ 60.00

National Audubon membership-----\$ 20.00

Plantings around Ks. Wildlife and Parks office .....\$1000.00

Ending balance-----\$7496.86

## Presenter: Christine Brodsky



Ecologists have traditionally tended to think of nature as one thing and cities as something else entirely, yet fully two thirds of the wildlife species of North America can be found in cities and suburbs. As the footprint of urbanization spreads to cover ever more of the planet, urban ecologists, including Brodsky, are looking at cities as a novel ecosystem, a human-

influenced habitat for wildlife. Urban habitats pose challenges for wildlife, like cars and pavement, but they also offer rewards, like unguarded bowls of catfood and feeders with sunflower seeds. Ecologists don't yet fully understand what is going on with wildlife in cities, and many questions remain unanswered.

Cities have humans by definition, most of whom have preferences for things like ballfields and manicured lawns and many of whom feel unkempt patches of trees and bushes in vacant lots attract rats and crime. Wildlife prefers homogeneous habitat and those same unkempt vacant lots. Brodsky's interest is the urban intersection of human habitat preferences and wildlife habitat preferences and how both can be satisfied. Her research focuses on vacant lots in Baltimore, but her conclusions apply equally to the micropolitan center that is Pittsburg. The wildlife half of Brodsky's research documented sixty species of birds in Baltimore's vacant lots, and found that more species occurred on lots with more trees. Birds preferred to nest in densely shrubby areas, even when there was an expansive lot surrounding the shrubs. The social half of Brodsky's research surveyed human perceptions of what they desired in vacant lots. Humans want cared-for, maintained lots.

But humans also want trees for their aesthetic beauty and shade. Study after study has shown that exposure to and access to nature increases the quality of life of humans. Sick people recover faster if they can see nature from their hospital window. In fact, one of Baltimore city's goals is to double the current tree canopy in the city because humans want that. So, there is an overlap. Brodsky pointed out that a balanced approach, where lots are maintained but preserve some dedicated shrubby areas around trees would serve the needs of both humans and birds.

This approach will work best if the people involved understand it, and to that end, Brodsky helps out with a project at Francis Scott Key middle school. A local developer removed trees for an apartment project and needed to make up for that by planting the same number of trees somewhere else. They approached the school, suggesting that the school yard campus accept the trees as a donation. The school worked with the developer to design a STEM curriculum around the schoolyard, which was designed to offer 4 different types of environments and named the Anthem Arboretum. Brodsky works with the kids to help them learn about the birds they see. Brodsky reports that the kids are excited by the ecosystem interactions they are learning about, and she predicts that if urban kids come to value nature, the balance in greenspace design between human and wildlife needs will be more easily achieved.

**Megan Corrigan**

*Refreshments were provided by Mary Tersinar and Mary Kilcher. Thanks so much.*

## HAPPENINGS IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS

### SPERRY-GALLIGAR WINS AWARD

I am pleased to announce that Sperry-Galligar Audubon has won the 2018 Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE) Award for Outstanding Community/Non-Profit Organization in Kansas! Many of you may not be familiar with the KACEE organization, so I wanted to introduce you to one of my most favorite and valuable (both professionally and personally) organizations. As described on their website KACEE is "one of the first and largest conservation and largest conservation and environmental education organizations in the nation. KACEE's diverse statewide partnership network includes more than 700 organizations, business, agencies, schools, and 350 individuals. Since 1970, KACEE has provided professional development for more than 21,000 educators, impacting an estimated 350,000 Kansas Students. KACEE also coordinates the Kansas Green Schools network, working with over 450 schools at 19 districts from across the state in engaging students to lead the way in creating greener and healthier schools."

I went to college to become science teacher, but I could never have imagined that I would be teaching science to so many different audiences in so many ways. About my junior year of college, Dr. Cindy Ford opened the environmental education door for me by letting me tag along with her to a KACEE Conference. This was not my first professional conference experience, but it was the first time I walked away from a conference feeling incredibly inspired and feeling like I had found my niche. What I didn't know was how much KACEE would have an impact on my life. I am a better educator because of KACEE. Isaac Newton once said

"if I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" I am successful because people before me worked relentlessly to make KACEE one of the leading environmental education organizations in the country. I have been able to develop a professional network of outstanding people who are willing to share their depth of knowledge, their experiences, and their ideas. I have made wonderful friends in this organization, and I don't think there is a more supportive group of people than the KACEE staff. Last year, I was asked to become a KACEE Board Member, and I was quite proud to accept that invitation.

Being a science educator, especially in Kansas, isn't always easy. It is difficult to compete with all the electronic stimuli that this generation of students have grown accustomed to. It is not easy for teachers to fit a growing body of science knowledge into the same amount of time. Not to mention preparing them for standardized tests, adjusting to changing standards, etc.; but when you have an organization backing you by providing encouragement, by providing resources, by providing the research to justify what we already intrinsically know our lives get just a little bit easier.

Several years ago, I was chosen by KACEE to be trained as a partner facilitator for nationally recognized programs like project WILD. These are programs that are all housed under the KACEE umbrella. Becoming a facilitator has allowed me to train local teachers in these programs as well as build professional relationships at PSU that were not possible before. I have also been able to keep providing new material for my summer camp kids who beg their parents all year long to sign them up for another week of Nature Reach day camp.

**Delia Lister**

### Sightings.....



### Fields of Purple

This time of year plowed agricultural fields will have a glow of purple. Both of the mints shown below grow *en masse* in this barren soil. You can also find both of these species in your garden.



Henbit  
Lighter purple glow;  
more common in fields



Dead Nettle



### EMMETT'S PIC OF THE MONTH

#### Mayapple

Also called mandrake, this flower blooms in early spring woodlands. The fruit is edible when ripe, but just try to pick it before wild animals eat it!

**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  
816 E. Atkinson Ave  
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762**

Please Print



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

**Events &  
Miscellany**



**Bored? Try the Board!**

Sperry Galligar Audubon will be losing some board members next year, so if you are interested in what we do, and would like to serve on our board, let us know before the March meeting. The Board meets monthly, an hour before each public program and once in the summer.

**SAVING WILDLIFE NEAR LAKES**

Lynnea Rochelle, an 11-year-old environmental activist from the Kansas City area, is making a mark through the Cast It in Kansas Program. She asked several Audubon chapters around the state for support in placing repositories for fishing line and hooks near lakes in order to save wildlife from tangling in those lines. Sperry-Galligar Audubon contributed to her cause.

**Turkeys  
know it is  
spring.**

**Look for  
the males  
displaying  
for female  
attention.**



**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.

