

NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2017 - 2019

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Vice President:

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April 2018

VOLUME 2018 ISSUE 4

SPERRY-GALLIGAR AUDUBON CHAPTER WINS AWARD

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Chapter recently won an award from the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE). KACEE honors individuals and organizations for their outstanding efforts to provide environmental education to the public. The annual Awards Banquet is held to showcase the "2018 Best".

Wayne and Megan traveled to Manhattan, KS to accept the award for Sperry-Galligar Audubon. Wayne eloquently spoke to nearly 50 attendees.

Following are Wayne's comments: "The thing that makes a good organization is a great group of people. Sperry-Galligar Audubon has a great group of people. I could give a long list of names of people who contribute, but *you* don't know them, and *they* already know who they are. So, instead, I'll give a couple of examples.

But before I do, I should say that southeast Kansas is a rather quirky place. We're almost Ozarks. We almost don't belong. Who would have thought there were coal mines in Kansas. During prohibition we supplied moonshine to bars across the state and as far away as Chicago. Southeast Kansas has a lot of very interesting people!

And Sperry-Galligar Audubon welcomes them all. In fact, Sperry-Galligar Audubon *is* these people. We have a former coal miner who now wanders strip pits photographing the flowers that grow there. That will be our program next month. An older member remembers as a boy seeing an entire flock of yellow-headed blackbirds. He was amazed. He has continued his entire life being amazed at the things he sees in nature and sharing that amazement with others. We have a couple of professors, field biologists, who bring a scientific perspective to our group. Now that they have retired I'm sure they'll have even *more* time to contribute to our organization. Local teachers encourage their students to attend our programs.

When we see the *number* of people who attend our programs, when we see the *variety* of people who attend—young and old—we feel really good about what we're doing. *That* is our reward.

But there is one thing that we *don't* have. I thank KACEE for giving us a testimonial!"

Wayne Bockelman



Wayne Bockelman and Megan Corrigan representing the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Chapter following the announcement of the award.



Wayne and Megan accepting the award on behalf of the Pittsburg chapter.

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

Apr 26: "Stealing Wildflowers the Photographic Way", by Dr. Cindy Ford. Using Emmett Sullivan's photos, discover pros and cons of developing that patch of wildflowers in your yard. Find out which native plants do well in landscaping, how to establish a plot, and why native plants are desirable plant selections for attracting wildlife.

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

6:00 Board Meeting Highlights

Megan Corrigan, Secretary

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

February Minutes: Read and approved.

Treasurer's Report (Liz): \$7491.79

March Refreshments: Thank you Cynthia Pfannestiel

April presentation: Dr. Cindy Ford – Stealing Wildflowers

the Photographic Way - Featuring photos by Emmett Sullivan.

KDWPT Project: The \$1000 donated to Sperry Galligar in memory of Walt DeGruson will be matched 3:1 by grant funds, providing \$4000 for habitat improvement around the new KDWPT building. Leopold benches and a critter-proof birdfeeder are also possibilities. The project will be ongoing throughout the fall and next spring. Drs. Steve and Cindy Ford will oversee the project.

Bench at Wilderness Park: Parts of the bench are rotting. Bob will contact Bob Hurt, who originally donated the bench, to see if he might have ideas for repair.

Award: Sperry Galligar has been awarded the 2018 Excellence in Conservation and Environmental Education by the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education. Wayne and Megan will attend the awards banquet in Manhattan, KS, on April 6 to receive the award on behalf of the club.

Officers: The club is seeking nominations for all board positions, especially president and secretary.

Field Trip: Burroughs Audubon of Kansas City invites interested birders to join them at Neosho Wildlife Area Saturday, April 28 either at 6:30 am or 8:30 am or both for an outing led by Andrew Burnett. The Wildlife Area is on Highway 47, 1.5 miles east of St. Paul.

Financial Statement

Liz Mangile, Treasurer

April 2018

Beginning balance-----\$7496.86

Credits

I tee shirt and I local membership-----\$25.00

Debits

Newsletter-----\$ 5.07

Ending balance-----\$7516.79



Presenter: Zachary Cordes



Reptiles haven't had it easy lately. In 1998, 253 species of reptiles were considered vulnerable, but that number has since grown to 1,215. One locally threatened species is the Broad-headed Skink, which, in Kansas, has historically been found in the easternmost regions of the state.

These semi-arboreal lizards like to live in rotting wood, in snags, logs or in the rotting center of trees. Females guard their eggs, defending them against foes as large as a 3-foot Speckled King Snake.

For the past few years, Zack Cordes has been trapping and counting Kansas Broad-headed Skinks, in conjunction with documenting their habitat to determine what type of habitat needs to be protected in order to protect the skinks.

He's overcome a few challenges. For one thing, Broad-headed skinks look a lot like Five-lined Skinks, so much so that they used to be considered one species. Guidebooks explain that the two species can be differentiated by counting scales on the upper lip. Broad-headed skinks should have 5 scales between the nostril and the eye, while Five-lined should have only 4. Zack says that's true sometimes, but not always.

Sometimes with adult males it takes genetic analysis to be sure.

Cordes started surveying skinks in 2015. He used drift fence arrays that funnel animals into traps that were checked every morning. He set up 9 survey sites within the historical range of the skink, but only caught 9 Broad-headed Skinks throughout the season. In 2016 he decided to focus his attention on the Marais des Cygnes areas and change his approach by expanding the visual survey area around each array. This led to better success and the capture of 42 Broad-headed Skinks. In 2017 Cordes surveyed more areas with the new methods and captured 80 skinks.

Analysis of Cordes' data revealed some things that were surprising and other things that were not. The most important habitat variable that correlates with the presence of Broad-headed skinks is the presence of rotting logs that were 3-4 meters in length. There also seem to be more skinks if the canopy is dominated by trees 20 cm diameter at breast height, so, more mature trees. What was surprising was a correlation between the presence of skinks and the species of trees, with there seeming to be more Broad-headed skinks where there were more Black Walnut trees.

Cordes will continue to survey skinks in 2018 and he hopes to determine other important habitat variables. He would like to survey skinks on private lands, and he would be glad to hear from any land-owners with property containing woodland who would be willing to allow him to survey. He can be reached at Zackary.Cordes@ks.gov

Megan Corrigan

LOOKING FOR AUDUBON BOARD PRESIDENT.

Refreshments provided by
Cynthia Pfannenstiel and Liz Mangile.
Thanks much.

HAPPENINGS IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS



On March 30, 2018, my wife, Liz, arrived home a little after 10:00 A.M. and saw a horrifying event taking place just outside our back door. A Cooper's Hawk brought down a female Wood Duck within

a few feet from our back door. As she drove past the encounter into the garage the hawk began dragging the captured duck, which was too large to carry in flight, on to our patio. When she exited the garage the hawk flew away abandoning its prey. Upon entering the back door she urgently summoned me for a look at the situation. I only saw the dying duck and the blood spattered patio.

I took a quick photo and left the dead duck assuming the hawk would return for its meal. It didn't return soon so I put the duck in an open area on our back acreage, hoping the hawk would eventually find it. An hour or so later Liz started out the back door and what she saw was startling. The Cooper's Hawk was standing on our back step near the patio door apparently looking for its lost prey. It was reluctant

to fly and I managed to get a few photos before he flew away.

This is the second time I've had a Cooper's Hawk take a Wood Duck on my place. Several years ago I saw the scattered feathers of a Wood Duck and followed the trail to the thorny blackberries in our fence line. The hawk flushed when I arrived. And for the next two days I saw it return inside the thorny bushes eating the remains of its kill. Apparently, when prey is too large to carry away on the wing they hide it and return later. Both times it was a female Wood Duck which nest in our nesting boxes on our property and in a hollow tree near our patio.

A point to make here is that in spite of the gut-wrenching affect this has when observed it is just Nature taking place as it has throughout time. I recall

someone complaining that a Cooper's Hawk killed his Cardinal at his bird feeder and someone responded with, **"If it didn't kill yours it would have killed someone else's!"** ###

Bob Mangile



Hurricane Harvey Update on Houston Audubon Sanctuaries

At the September board meeting, Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society (SGAS) voted to make a donation to the Houston Audubon Society (HAS) to help with cleanup and repair damages of their nature sanctuaries caused by Hurricane Harvey.

On August 17, 2017, Harvey hit the Texas gulf coast and lingered until September 3. High winds and 40-50 inches of rain inundated and damaged many of the Houston Audubon Nature Sanctuaries. Trees were blown down or defoliated, roads, trails, bridges, and boardwalks were washed away and buildings damaged.

Houston Audubon maintains 17 nature sanctuaries covering over 3,400 acres. Many SGAS members have birded some of these sanctuaries, including Smith Woods, High Island, and Bolivar Flats. Several of these sanctuaries, including the Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary, are used as educational tools for the students of the Houston urban area.

I recently spoke by phone with Julie Gold, Development Director of HAS. She reported that much work has been completed by volunteers and contractors. However, many areas are still in need of repairs. At Smith Woods, two bridges and one boardwalk need to be completed or repaired. The Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary needs many boardwalks repaired or replaced over Rummel Creek which flooded during Harvey. Several smaller projects also need to be completed. Much of this work will be done by volunteers, but other work will need to be done by contractors because of the complexity or safety of the project. Even with volunteer workers, materials still need to be purchased. Immediately after Harvey, chain saws, tree pruners, etc. had to be purchased to help with the vast damage to so many of the Nature Sanctuaries.

Why is this important to us in Kansas? Both the Mississippi and the Central Flyway pass over the Texas gulf coast. Many migrating birds use these sanctuaries as resting places after flying non-stop over the many miles of the Gulf of Mexico. Emily and Kevin, fellow birders from Houston, stated that fall migration was almost non-existent in their backyard. They weren't sure of the reason but wondered if defoliated and damaged trees might possibly have contributed.

It will take many years to restore the Texas gulf coast to pre-Harvey conditions, but the Houston Audubon Society is working very hard on restoration of these sanctuaries.

More information is available at houstonaudubon.org

Carolyn Chips

Sightings.....



Skinks of SE Kansas



BROADHEAD SKINK
Large lizard with reddish head;
not as common as 5-lined skink



FIVE-LINED SKINK
Common lizard found in
wooded areas of SE Kansas

Send your newsletter articles, bird sightings, and nature notes to C. Ford by May 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**



Emmett's Pic of the Month

This feather was found at the
Southeast Kansas Nature Center in
Galena, KS

Can you name the bird?



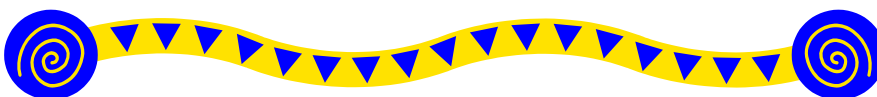
Is this a double-crested cormorant or a
northern cormorant?
What is a definitive ID difference?

**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.

APRIL BONUS PAGE

ACCEPTING THE KACEE AWARD THE REST OF THE STORY

On Friday, April 6, Megan and I traveled to Manhattan to receive an award from the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education. KACEE selected Sperry-Galligar Audubon for excellence as a Community Non-Profit organization. Other awards were given to individuals, schools, and governmental organizations—eight awards in all across the state of Kansas.

Delia Lister wrote a fine article in last month's newsletter about the award itself and about KACEE. This article is sort of a trip report about our weekend, for anyone interested.

The awards banquet was at Sunset Zoo. Wine and appetizers were served before dinner, and formally-dressed young ladies holding zoo animals mingled with the crowd. There was a three-banded armadillo curled into a ball, a chinchilla from the Andes, a large tortoise from India, and a domestic speckled king snake. In the case of our touching or petting an animal, the young ladies offered us hand cleanser.

The awards ceremony immediately followed the dinner. Awardees had been told to limit their acceptance speech to no more than two minutes. The awardee immediately before us spoke for five or ten minutes. When I looked at Megan during the speech she shot me that dagger stare which said, "Don't you even think of talking one second more than two minutes."

I mentioned in the speech that southeast Kansas is an unusual part of the state. We have trees after all. Some comments made people laugh. After the ceremony it seemed like everyone and his brother came up to me to tell me their own southeast Kansas story. Even Megan paid me a rare compliment when I was finished. She told me, "I don't dislike what you said."

Megan and I had planned on camping out after the awards banquet, but the weather forecast caused us to rethink those plans. It was snowing and 19° F by morning. We stayed in an Air BnB for the first time. Megan used her smart phone on the drive up to find a young couple who offered a room in their home for the night. It was much cheaper than a hotel. Jill and her husband turned out to be very nice. The room was lovely. And in the online comments after we left, Jill told the whole world that we were very "clean."

Still, Megan tends to second guess herself. On the way to the Air BnB we saw what looked to be an inexpensive motel not far from the zoo. It was so conveniently located and might possibly have been cheaper than the house, Megan lamented. By the time we were ready for bed that night Megan could resist no longer. She had a smart phone and had to see what we had missed. Indeed, there were comments online from people who had stayed at the motel. We learned that at check-in, the manager gives you a can of roach spray. Another visitor quoted Obi-Wan Kenobi from the first *Star Wars* movie, "You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy."

Hooray for smart phones.

I have to tell just one more thing about the trip. The KACEE plaque was not the only award I was given that weekend. On the way back Megan and I did a 5K run in Nevada, Missouri, at Cottey College. I won a second place medal in the Men's Division. Cottey College, as you may know, is an all-girls school—I will tell neither how many men participated in the run nor how many women finished ahead of me.

By the end of the run it was snowing. There was no requirement of an acceptance speech.

—Wayne Bockelman

