



# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2018 - 2020

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**Vice President:**

Christine Brodsky

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David Hollie

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Liz Mangile

**Newsletter Editor**

Cindy Ford

[cford@gus.pittstate.edu](mailto:cford@gus.pittstate.edu)

**January Meeting**  
**Thursday, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Yates 102, PSU**  
**Pittsburg, KS**  
**\*\*Presentation\*\***

**Jan. 31** — "Southwest Biology: A Science Camp for High Schoolers" by Jenn Rader, Southeast Kansas Nature Center Director. The Sternberg Museum and Fort Hays State University offer science camps for elementary through high school students each summer. Jenn will highlight areas of New Mexico & Arizona featured in the student program.

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

Jan 2019

VOLUME 2018 ISSUE 1

## SE Kansas 2019 Christmas Bird Count

There's an old saying in biology: "At any given time and place an organism will do what it damned well pleases." I'm pretty sure that goes for Audubon members too. We had a pretty good count this year, all things considered. We had more observers this year than last (10 vs 7) and they put in more total hours and miles, soooo we saw more species this year than last (57 vs 50), but we had fewer observers this year than two years ago (16), soooo we saw more species two years ago (60). One of the ten observers this year, Ron Huebner, travelled all the way from Tulsa to do our count. Ours was his tenth count this season. He said some of the CBCs on the Texas coast had hundreds of observers and "hot shot" teams – really accomplished teams of birders who would be sent to check on questionable identifications, and to ferret out species that "should" be in an area, but hadn't yet been seen. Thanks for making the effort to join our humble count, Ron.

This year's weather was chilly and overcast all day, rather similar to last year. Of course birds have to eat regardless of weather, but I think they are not as active and easily seen or heard on cold, gloomy days, so it takes a bit more bird-dog diligence to find and identify them. We didn't get the waterfowl diversity we sometimes get – only Canada geese, mallards, and a few gadwalls. No gulls this year. No hairy woodpeckers, and no "official" red-headed woodpeckers, although a few were spotted outside the designated area. Our mascot red-heads are noted for population fluctuations, so perhaps their scarcity this year is not too unusual. I was surprised no one reported red-breasted nuthatches given the numbers that had been seen at feeders and elsewhere a few weeks earlier. On the other hand, a few "summer" birds were seen, three great egrets for example,

which is a bit unusual for mid-winter in this area (although it had been relatively warm previous to our count), a hermit thrush, and a killdeer. Lots of eagles this year, fifteen vs six the previous two years (although they often fly very high and wide so quite possibly the same eagle may be counted by birders in different sections of the count circle.)



As noted in other years, one has to take such year-to-year comparisons of local bird counts with a big grain of salt. There are so many local variables that only when dozens or even hundreds of counts are combined

over several years do true trends start to be recognized. Like voting, individual efforts don't seem to count for much, but of course they do, and it is always gratifying to me to be able to see and appreciate the beauty and diversity of nature, even in the seeming bleakness of mid-winter, and to share that appreciation with my Audubon friends. I also think it's important to keep in mind that while we may not keep track of birds in the great Texas gulf coast, and have the population resources of a Houston to do so, we do live within a pretty unique ecosystem – a relatively thinly populated geography of aging non-reclaimed strip-mines edged by a diversity of agriculture. Throw in several creeks and the Neosho River, we have a diverse landscape of considerable natural value well worth watching.



**See complete list of SE Kansas 2019  
Christmas Bird Count species on  
BONUS PAGE.**

## 6:00 Board Meeting Highlights David Hollie, Secretary

**Attending:** Mavis Benner, Wayne Bockelman, Christine Brodsky, Steve Ford, David Hollie, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Emmett Sullivan

**Board member contact info for annual report:** Passed around to confirm accuracy

**October Minutes:** Read and approved

**Treasurer's Report:** \$3246.01

**This month's refreshments:** Provided Mary Kilcher, thank you!

**January's meeting** – Jenn Rader: "Southwest Biology: A Science Camp for High Schoolers"

**Reminder of Christmas Bird Count:** January 1. Meeting at McCune Farm to Market Restaurant at 7:00am

**Books donated** by Bob Mangile were appreciated, got a thank you note back from the Community Health Center

**Parent/Kids day at the Natural History Reserve:** Still planning and open to ideas/suggestions



American lotus — beautifully photographed by Emmett Sullivan in Cherokee County. This will be entered into a contest. Should be a winner.

## Financial Statement...Liz Mangile, Treasurer December 2018/January 2019

**Beginning balance**-----\$3349.57

### Credits

Deposit money from feed sale-----\$2373.50

Blue Bird house-----\$ 15.00

**Total**----- \$2388.50

### Debits

Newsletter-----\$ 2.56

Paid Blue Ribbon for feed-----\$1268.40

Tax Ks. Dept. Of Revenue-----\$ 174.24

**Total**----- \$1455.20

**Ending balance**-----\$4291.87

## November Presenter: Wade Boys



For our December meeting, we were privileged to learn about dragonflies of the Ozark-Ouachita region from Wade Boys, graduate student from University of Arkansas. The Ozark-Ouachita region is one of the few mountainous regions between the Appalachians and the Rockies. This region is full of unique taxa, with many endemic species of plants, fungi, fishes, mussels, mammals, amphibians, and insects. Boys taught us about four rare dragonflies in this region: Ouachita Spinetail, Westfalls Snaketail, Ozark Clubtail, and Ozark Emerald.

Of these four, he was able to successfully document the latter two species during his two summers of field work in the region. The basis for his master's project is to model the distribution of these rare dragonflies to project how their range might be altered through several climate change scenarios.

Boys' enthusiasm for dragonflies really came through during his presentation. He excitedly told us of several experiences he has had while working with odonates (the order that includes dragonflies and damselflies). One notable experience he had was serendipitously coming across an Ozark Emerald that had recently emerged into its adult form from the aquatic nymph stage. He eagerly looked around to try to find the exuvia (the exoskeleton shell of the nymph that it leaves behind when emerging into the flying adult form). He searched for some time and nearly gave up until he noticed something hanging onto his net. The hooks on the legs of the exuvia had attached to his insect net, what luck! The exuvia of an Ozark Emerald had not been collected since 1936!



Ozark emerald dragonfly

In addition to having great experiences, Boys' field work is helping conserve the dragonflies that he's studying. His research is aimed at conservation efforts for the future decades as their habitat inevitably changes. His modeling results show that the distribution of Ozark Clubtail and Ozark Emerald are likely to shift northward as the climate warms, so it is important to conserve their habitat both in areas where they currently are as well as areas where they might be in the future.

David Hollie

AUDUBON

Thank you, Mary Kilcher, for the refreshments at the November meeting. We appreciate your help.

## HAPPENINGS IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS

## The Great Turkey Vulture Escape of 2018

I have always said that if I could have one super power it would be to communicate with animals. They could tell me if they were hungry, in pain, bored, happy, or maybe just tell me a good story.

At the end of November, I was attending a week-long conference in "The Big Easy." It is safe to say, though, that while I was away life was not so easy for a couple of my staff members—one being the bipedal kind, the other being a ten-year-old turkey vulture aptly named "Stinky."

My first call upon arrival to Louis Armstrong Airport in New Orleans was from one of my students letting me know that another student (who shall remain nameless for her protection) accidentally left a door open while transferring our vulture to an indoor cage and it escaped. It is appropriate for me at this point to mention that *day one* training with our raptors is that *all* doors will *absolutely* be closed behind you to avoid accidental escapes. Needless to say, the student in question knew exactly what she had done the moment it happened and felt really bad—I mean really bad.

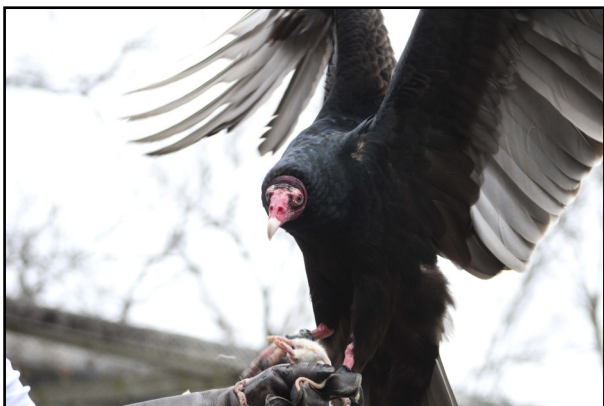
The conference went on and more problems of various kinds arose not only for me at the conference, but also for the animals and staff at home (there aren't enough pages in this newsletter to list them). Saying I was glad to be home after a week would be a huge understatement. I would also like to say that obtaining, training, and caring for our birds is a big deal. It is a ridiculous amount of paperwork, physical labor, and

a huge amount of TLC on a daily basis. I and my staff (past and present) all have personal connections with these birds and we were all quite devastated that no one had seen "Stinky" all week. I was almost sure she had been attacked by another animal or simply starved to death in the cold—and it was cold that week.

Now here is where the story takes a turn for the better. The first day I was back, now *eight* days post vulture escape, I was giving a program to a group of high school photography students. I was talking along about the birds as per usual and mentioning that we had a recent escape. At that point, a student stopped me mid-sentence and said "Is that your vulture?" and pointed to the trees just above our enclosures. Sure enough it was, and I had no choice but to stop the program, run to the lab, and get a big bloody rat to entice our "Stinky" down. It took about 10 minutes of me calling the vulture and showing off the bloody rat (our equivalent of a steak dinner) all with 18 cameras pointed at me. As if by magic, the bird flew down to my glove and I quickly moved "Stinky" back into the enclosure. At that point the program was over and we all had an experience we will soon never forget. It is now several weeks past the great vulture escape of 2018, and the vulture is seemingly back to its normal ornery self.

Where did "Stinky" go that week? Was she happy to be free? Did she decide that life on her own was not as fun as she thought? Was she just waiting to hear my voice to come back? Am I just *that* good at training vultures? If only I could understand the story "Stinky" has to tell...

**Delia "The Bird Whisperer" Lister**



Stinky coming down to the rat on Delia's hand after being on the lam for about a week. She was hungry!



## Sightings.....



Look for these uncommon species at your feeders this winter



Red-breasted nuthatch



Pine siskin

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



Thanks to those who helped with the annual Sperry-Galligar Bird Seed Sale. This event helps to fund our chapter. Also, a big thanks to Blue Ribbon for their donation of the truck and transportation.

Thanks to the members who participated in the 2019 Christmas Bird Count. This is a great way to contribute through community science knowledge of bird populations.

**Why not participate this year in the  
Great Backyard Bird Count?**

The Great Backyard Bird Count will take place February 15-18. Bob Mangile put some information on our web site if you wish to learn more about it.

<http://sperry-galligar.com/FieldTr.html>



**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.

## BONUS PAGE

### SOUTHEAST KANSAS MINED LANDS WINTER BIRD COUNT January 1, 2019

**Total species seen was 57;** individuals 3821; Time 7:45 am – 4:30 pm; Temp 24 – 26 F; Wind N at 10 to 5 mph; Still water partly open, Moving water open; no snow; 100% overcast skies all day; 10 observers in 5 parties; 2.25 party hours on foot, 1.75 miles, 28.75 party hours by car, 168.4 miles for overall total of 31 party hours, 170.15 party miles. Participants: Mavis and Ray Benner, Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Cindy and Steve (compiler) Ford, Andrew George, Ron Huebner, Elizabeth and Robert Mangile.

Canada Goose	202	Tufted Titmouse	16
Gadwall	5	White-breasted nuthatch	6
Mallard	307	Brown Creeper	3
Duck sp	77	Winter Wren	1
Wild Turkey	9	Carolina Wren	10
Pied-billed Grebe	9	Golden-crowned Kinglet	11
Rock Pigeon	7	Eastern Bluebird	54
Eurasian Collard-Dove	2	Hermit Thrush	1
Mourning Dove	21	American Robin	32
Killdeer	1	Northern Mockingbird	18
Great Blue Heron	6	European Starling	217
Great Egret	3	Cedar Waxwing	50
Northern Harrier	24	House Sparrow	23
Bald Eagle		Purple Finch	4
Adults	9	American Goldfinch	55
Immatures	6	American Tree Sparrow	9
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	Savannah Sparrow	4
Red-tailed Hawk	30	Fox Sparrow	2
Harlan's Hawk	1	Song Sparrow	39
Buteo sp	3	Swamp Sparrow	2
Belted Kingfisher	2	White-throated Sparrow	64
Red-bellied Woodpecker	41	Harris's Sparrow	44
Yellow-bellied sapsucker	5	White-crowned Sparrow	107
Downy Woodpecker		Dark-eyed Junco	497
Northern Flicker	31	Meadowlark ( <i>Sturnella</i> sp)	328
Pileated Woodpecker	4	Red-winged Blackbird	202
American Kestrel	13	Brown-headed Cowbird	18
Loggerhead Shrike	1	Brewer's Blackbird	1
Blue Jay	72	Blackbird sp	515
American Crow	110	Northern Cardinal	243
Horned Lark	171		
Carolina Chickadee	45		