

NEWS FROM THE FLOCK...

Newsletter of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Sperry– Galligar

Audubon Chapter

Officers 2019 - 2021

President:

Steve Ford

Vice President:

Mary Jo Meier

Secretary

Christine Brodsky

Treasurer

Liz Mangile

Newsletter Editor

Cindy Ford

cford@gus.pittstate.edu

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

October 31— Karen Smith and Christine Kline from Burroughs Audubon Society will be sharing information about the Wings Over Weston program which is a partnership with the Burroughs Audubon Society and the Missouri State Parks held in Weston, Missouri.

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

Oct 2019

VOLUME 2019 ISSUE 7

WHERE ARE THE BIRDS? by Cindy Ford

Maybe you heard the news too. A few weeks ago, a news report alarmed me. Bird populations in the U.S. are down 29%—a net loss of 2.5 billion individuals—primarily in only 12 families. The affected species include common birds like sparrows, blackbirds, warblers, and finches, many of whom are generalists in habitat requirements. Grassland birds, like meadowlarks and grasshopper sparrows, have been most affected, resulting in a 53% loss since 1970. Forest birds suffered a loss of 1 billion individuals. Shorebirds declined about 37% in less than 50 years. Even introduced species are declining in population numbers. Waterfowl species are holding their own since there has been considerable effort to preserve and restore the remaining pothole region in northern U.S. and in Canada. These data have been compiled from years of species counts through the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon Christmas Bird Count, and the International Shorebird Survey.

Loss of habitat is the main factor in bird population decline. Overall, the solution to stabilizing these populations is a complicated and global issue (since many bird species migrate, spending time in two distinct areas). National parks and forests, state parks and preserves, local community efforts, and private land owners provide habitat for numerous species of birds, but the areas are usually fragmented and postage stamp sized when considering overall global habitat requirements.

To further complicate the future for birds, habitat responds to climate change. Habitats are fluid. With changes in temperatures and moisture, vegetation either survives over a period of time or does not. “New” habitats may support our current wild communities of birds or these birds will have to extend their ranges (if possible) or decline. Some species are adaptable; some are not.

A multi-faceted management means survival of a community of species, including the target species. Mined Land Wildlife Areas in SE

Kansas are “managed” for hunting. Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism manage many of these plots of land for hunting deer, turkeys, quail, ducks, and small mammals, as well as fish. If you have explored some of these areas, you will know that even songbirds are plentiful in many of these rugged areas. The habitat provided for the game birds and mammals also benefits the rest of the wildlife community. Yes, these areas were once bare rock and soil in order to extract coal, but now they are covered with trees, grasslands, and water.

We are fortunate in this area to have the potential for observing many birds. SE Kansas is the most biodiverse area in the state, partly due to the fact that there are large tracts of forest east of Kansas and large areas of grasslands to the West. We live at the junction of these two regions. Therefore, we have bird species from each type of habitat. Secondly, this area of Kansas is still rather rural with ample acres of land in “natural” vegetation cover (excluding row crops). Woodlots, stream banks, hay fields and pastures complement habitat set aside in mined land wildlife areas, parks, and wildlife preserves.

Efforts to preserve or restore habitat for birds and other wildlife are ongoing through conservation easements, land trusts, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, Habitat First (KS Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism), National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat, and plant nurseries that encourage native plantings. Joining conservation organizations provides funding to buy and manage land for native species. Volunteering to become stewards of wild places gives satisfaction that we can be doing something rather than just talking. Writing letters to government officials, agency administrations, and community councils can change the compass needle. Transforming a plot of ground, even though small, can help provide habitat to bring bird species in to get a closer look and sustain them for years. Can we make a difference? **Yes.**

6:00 Board Meeting Highlights

Christine Brodsky, Secretary

Attending: Mavis Benner, Steve & Cindy Ford, Wayne Bockelman, Christine Brodsky, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Mary Jo Meier, Ruth & Emmett Sullivan, Jessica Jones

August minutes: Read and approved.

Treasurer's Report: \$3173.60 balance. Local dues (\$15) due to Liz Mangile in September.

Tonight's Speaker: "Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area Restoration", by Ed Vanderbeck, Pittsburg State University & Ducks Unlimited District Chairman, and John Ritchey, Ducks Unlimited Senior Regional Director.

Field Trips: Saturday, Sept 28 at 9AM Tree ID/ecology with Cindy Ford – Wear your boots and bring your binoculars! Saturday, On October 12 at 10AM (meet at Home Depot in northeast corner of the parking lot) to Farlington Fish Hatchery with tour by Dan Mosier

Wildlife & Parks (Walt DeGrusen) Landscape Project: Rain is slowing progress. Steve & Cindy bought 18 shrubs and will "throw them in the ground" when we have a break in the rain.

Refreshments: We received an email about food restrictions in Yates 102, but we could still have refreshments in the hall if we get a table and restrict people from bringing food/drinks inside the room. After a discussion, we do not think it's worth it. We will not have refreshments this year. Thank you to those who originally volunteered to bring snacks – we appreciate your offered hospitality!

Pictures for Earth Day Table: Big metal trifold with old photos (18+ years old) needs updating, particularly info about who we are and what we do. Please take photos of Audubon in action and/or backyard birds that we could possibly include on the trifold for this year's Earth Day (April 22)! Give them to Bob or Emmett.

Bluebird Box Construction: Bob will lead bluebird box construction and is looking for about six helpers! Looking at various dates during the week. Email Bob if you'd like to help and some dates that you're free.

Next Meeting: October 31, 2019

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

October 2019

Liz Mangile, Treasurer

Beginning balance-----	\$3178.10
CREDITS	
Local dues-----	\$ 225.00
Total-----	\$ 225.10
DEBITS	
Newsletter-----	\$ 4.50
Total-----	\$ 4.50
Ending balance-----	\$3398.60

September Presenter: John Ritchey



Ed Vanderbeck, Pittsburg State University & Ducks Unlimited District Chairman introduced John Ritchey, Ducks Unlimited Senior Regional Director who provided an overview of restoration of Cheyenne Bottoms in central Kansas.

Currently one of the "Eight Wonders of Kansas", Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area in Great Bend, KS is home to a great diversity of birds, important sources of water and invertebrate prey species, and attracts over 100,000 visitors annually. Ed and John told us about the wonders of Cheyenne Bottoms and Ducks Unlimited for our September meeting.

Ducks Unlimited (DU) is a volunteer-based organization that started in 1937, whose mission is to "conserve, restore, and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North American's waterfowl." The impact of DU as a conservation organization is of the utmost importance as over 50% of the historical wetlands have been lost in the state of Kansas. Cheyenne Bottoms, the largest interior wetland in the United States, provides many important resources to Kansas: the wetlands moderate floods, clean groundwater, provide areas for recreation and habitat for over 900 species. DU supports conservation efforts at Cheyenne Bottoms, as its critical habitats support 40 species of migratory waterfowl, 45% of North America's shorebirds, and the endangered whooping crane.

Even beyond Kansas, DU recognizes the importance of conserving lands through which waterfowl migrate, particularly North Dakota's prairie pothole habitats. John Ritchey said that DU estimates that "88% of all the ducks that come through Kansas were hatched" in these habitats, as they are particularly high in invertebrate food resources for waterfowl.

Funded by local events, fundraising activities, as well as federal Pittman-Robertson Act funds, DU hopes to improve many aspects of Cheyenne Bottoms, particularly how water moves between each of the rain-fed pool units. Silt, or fine sediment, has been a major issue at the Bottoms, clogging the 12 miles of pipe structures and reducing water depth. Along with Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism (KDWPT), DU plans to raise money to repair and purchase new infrastructure, and remove hundreds of cubic yards of silt over the next few years. Interested in attending a DU event or participating in fundraising efforts? Visit the following website for a list of events and their dates: ducks.org/Kansas/events.



Christine Brodsky

Bob Mangile reports that he has compiled our 2019 Bluebird fledgling reports and posted this year's results on our web site at <http://sperry-galligar.com/Bluebrd.html>

HAPPENINGS IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS

The Nature Conservancy: Making a Difference in Kansas for 30 Years

Christine Brodsky

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to “conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends”. On September 25th, the Kansas Chapter of The Nature Conservancy celebrated its major accomplishments in the field of environmental conservation over the past 30 years. Many people attended this celebration, including a number of our Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society members! It was wonderful to see such a large turnout to celebrate the environmental conservation efforts in Kansas. It was especially notable for the event to be take place at Pittsburg State University since Dr. Theodore Sperry, after whom our Audubon Chapter is named, was an original founder of The Nature Conservancy.

Rob Manes, the Nature Conservancy’s State Director, gave a background on the Conservancy’s efforts nationwide, as well as the focus on Kansas. The national organization of The Nature Conservancy was founded in 1951 as an offshoot of the Ecological Society of America. Land acquisition has been the primary foundation of TNC’s conservation practices. A major goal of TNC is to identify and protect important natural areas, nationally and internationally, through donations, conservation easements, government funding, or partnerships with commercial/industrial/state organizations. Over the past 30 years, TNC has permanently protected 139,470 acres across Kansas, including five preserves that are open to the public. Along with providing a rich timeline of the history of TNC, Mr. Manes outlined TNC’s current top priorities throughout his presentation: 1) Tackle climate change, 2) Protect land and water, 3) Provide food and water sustainably, and 4) Build healthy cities. Major efforts that have already taken place in Kansas are mapping areas for wind energy development, fostering collaborations with those in agriculture to enhance food sustainability, and cleaning urban waterways.

The Pittsburg State Biology Department hopes to cultivate greater ties with the Nature Conservancy so the two groups can do ecological research on land acquired in Cherokee County, connect students to TNC internship opportunities, and promote environmental conservation projects in southeast Kansas. During the meeting, several Pittsburg State faculty members spoke about how the two organization’s goals overlap, from Dr. James Whitney’s research on fishes and rivers to Drs. Andrew George’s and Christine Brodsky’s research on restored mined land ecosystems. Although no projects are definite at this time, being one of the most biodiverse areas in the state, we hope that TNC will have a greater connection to southeast Kansas and Pittsburg State University in the future. Here’s to another successful 30 years of conserving biodiversity and the environment in Kansas!



Sightings.....



EMMETT'S PICS



Spotted sandpiper

Juvenile spotted sandpiper, found at Southeast Kansas Nature Center, Galena, KS
The bird was working along the shore of Shoal Creek.
I watched it for some time—very interesting bird.
A behavioral field mark is that they “pump” the tail.

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 _____

**Events &
Miscellany**



Hello Chimney Swift Counters,

On the evening of Sep. 15, 2019, Sperry-Galligar Audubon supporters went afield and counted chimney swifts at three swift roost locations, as follows:

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Methodist Church, 5th & Pine, 350 Swifts counted by Diane McCallum, and Wayne Bockelman.

Time: 7:47 p.m. to 7:58 p.m.

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Baptist community church, 6th and Rouse, 312 Swifts by Mavis Benner and Jessica Ruiz.

Time 7:40 pm to 7:52 pm

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Morning Sun Newspaper and nearby chimney combined, 7th. & Locust, 380 counted by Liz & Bob Mangile, Sheila & Bud Johnson and Penny Mayfield.

Time 7:51 pm to 8:02 pm.

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Total number of chimney swifts counted at three locations was 1042. Thanks for helping with this annual event. I'll report our results to "Swift Night Out" at <http://chimneyswifts.org/>

Bob Mangile

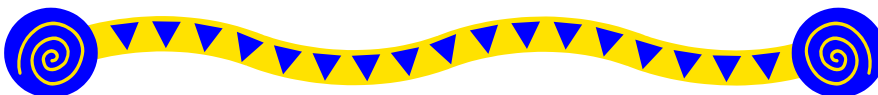
DUES ... DUES ... DUES... DUES
See Liz Mangile to pay your dues for the another great year of programs.

**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.

Adventures in the Colorado Rockies

Diane McCallum

My father and I drove out to Colorado in June to meet up with my sister and her family. Then we spent almost a week exploring the surrounding area, including Rocky Mountain National Park. (If you've never been there, I highly recommend it!) We drove up Trail Ridge Road and enjoyed spectacular views of snow-draped mountains.

The whole week was amazing, but there were two experiences that stand out in my mind. The first occurred when we were in the Kawuneeche Valley and stopped at Beaver Ponds picnic area. I'd seen some cars stopped by the road ahead, an unmistakable sign that some type of wildlife had been spotted, so I decided to follow a trail in that direction. As I walked, I thought I heard an osprey overhead, so my head was tilted back while I stared at the sky, trying to spot it through the tree branches. The path wound over to the right and I looked that way to watch my step over the scattered rocks. Then, just beyond some bushes, a big brown head with big ears popped into view! I froze. It



was a moose, just a few yards from me! We stared at each other, neither sure what to do. I knew I was in a dangerous position, but I didn't want to make any sudden moves. The moose seemed more puzzled about what I was than angry or frightened, so I finally took a few slow steps backward. He seemed okay with that, so I took a few more steps backward until I thought it was safe to turn around and slowly walk away. I met my sister on the trail and quickly told her we needed to get farther away. I was sorry I hadn't been able to take a picture, but I didn't want to risk making the moose feel threatened. We both walked up to the top of the trail and were able to look over a wooden fence to see the moose amble into sight below us (at a safe distance). It turned out to be a yearling, although it had looked big enough when close to me! I was glad I had retreated, though, because moments later,

the moose's mother walked out of the trees. I'm glad she didn't see me so close to her offspring! I've never been that close to a moose before and hope to never be again, although it was incredible.

On another day, we stopped at the Endovalley picnic area for lunch and were lucky enough to get a secluded table. It was nice to sit there and hear nothing but the wind through the trees. As we ate, a Steller's jay and a crow landed in nearby trees to check us out. My favorite visitor, however, showed up a few minutes later. My sister whispered, "Diane." I looked to my right and there was a mountain chickadee sitting on a branch near me. I held still and the little bird flew down onto the picnic table to peer at my sandwich. Then he flew down onto the bench right beside me! He was still staring at my sandwich, as if he thought he deserved part of it, while I held my breath. He tilted his head and then, giving up, he flew away. (Again I didn't get a photo because I didn't want to frighten him.)

Both encounters were amazing and made me feel very lucky. When treated with respect, wildlife will sometimes reward you with a closer look. It always seems better when it's unexpected!