



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

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

January 30 — "Fishing and Coal Mining: How Opposites Attract", by Connor Ossowski, Biologist for Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism where he manages the public fisheries in Cherokee, Crawford, and Neosho counties. Previously, he was an Aquatic Nuisance Species & Fisheries Research Technician for KDWP in Emporia, KS.

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

Jan 2020

VOLUME 2020 ISSUE 1

2020 Audubon Christmas Bird Count

SOUTHEAST KANSAS MINED LANDS WINTER BIRD COUNT, January 1, 2020

Total species: 58. Individuals: 4819. Time: 7:30 am – 4:30 pm. Temp: 37 – 57 F. Wind: S 10 – 25 mph. All water open. No snow. Sky clear all day. 15 observers in 6 parties. 1.5 party hours on foot, 2.75 party miles on foot, 30.5 party hours by car, 217.75 party miles by car. Participants: Mavis Benner, Ray Benner, Wayne Bockelman, Ximena Bogarin, Megan Corrigan, Bob Estes, Cindy Ford, Steve Ford (compiler), Chad Gardner, Andrew George, Delia Lister, Elizabeth Mangile, Robert Mangile, Ryan McGinty, Rick Tucker.

Canada goose	187	Tufted titmouse	20
Mallard	394	White-breasted nuthatch	4
duck sp	350	Brown creeper	2
Pied-billed grebe	8	Carolina wren	6
Rock pigeon	1	Golden-crowned kinglet	2
Eurasian collared-dove	5	Ruby-crowned kinglet	2
Mourning dove	2	Eastern bluebird	67
American coot	5	American robin	46
Wilson's snipe	1	Northern mockingbird	14
Great blue heron	7	European starling	83
Northern harrier	11	Cedar waxwing	102
Bald eagle	10	House sparrow	14
Red-shouldered hawk	2	House finch	4
Red-tailed hawk	46	American goldfinch	41
Buteo sp	1	Field sparrow	9
Belted kingfisher	3	Fox sparrow	3
Red-headed woodpecker	5	Dark-eyed junco	
Red-bellied woodpecker	28	Slate-colored	31
Yellow-bellied sapsucker	2	Unidentified	140
Downy woodpecker	10	White-crowned sparrow	35
Hairy woodpecker	3	Harris's sparrow	23
Northern Flicker		White-throated sparrow	36
Unidentified	11	avannah sparrow	45
Yellow-shafted	2	Song sparrow	24
American kestrel	22	Lincoln's sparrow	1
Loggerhead shrike	1	Swamp sparrow	6
Blue jay	33	Western meadowlark	1
American crow	191	Meadowlark (<i>Sturnella</i>)	365
Horned lark	54	Red-winged blackbird	1711
Carolina chickadee	27	Brown-headed cowbird	250
		Brewer's blackbird	80
		Common grackle	1
		blackbird sp	150
		Yellow-rumped warbler	
		Myrtle	12
		Northern Cardinal	67

6:00 Board Meeting Highlights Christine Brodsky, Secretary

Attending: Steve & Cindy Ford, Wayne Bockelman, Christine Brodsky, Delia Lister, Bob & Liz Mangile, Diane McCallum, Ruth & Emmett Sullivan

October minutes: Read and approved.

Treasurer's Report: \$3,622.62 balance.

Tonight's Speaker: "Recent Upgrades and Activities in the T.M. Sperry Herbarium", by Dr. Neil Snow from the Pitt State Biology Department. January's speaker is Connor Ossowski, Kansas Fisheries Biologist.

Bird Seed Sale: This Saturday, December 7th! Seed prices are the same as last year: Black Oil Sunflower - \$25 for 50 lb; \$14 for 25 lb bag; Wild Bird Mix - \$12 for 25 lb bag (no 50 lb mixed bag); Nyger Thistle - \$15 for 10 lb bag. Open for business at 9AM

New Display Board Update: Cindy ordered new trifold (blue background with Velcro dots) and will assemble before the Bird Seed Sale. Send photos to Cindy to include on the board (e.g. activities, field trips, birds, flowers, etc.).

Mined Land Christmas Bird Count: January 1st. Meet in McCune at the Farm to Market restaurant at 7AM. You can buy coffee/breakfast before heading out!

Wildlife & Parks (Walt DeGrusen) Landscape Project: Shrubs are now in the ground! Soil is not the best – lots of clay. Cindy called MO Wildflowers to send special seed mix for this soil type. We should get the seed around January (5 oz of seed for 2,350 ft²). Steve is working on the bird feeder design.

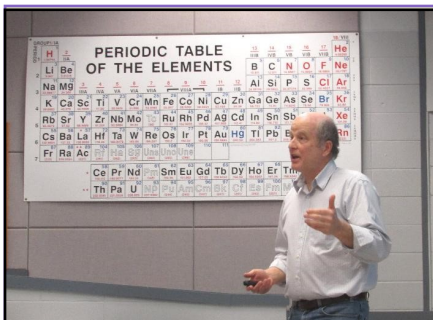
Next Meeting: January 30, 2020

FINANCIAL STATEMENT January 2020 Liz Mangile, Treasurer

Beginning balance-----	\$3628.61
Credits	
Birdhouses.....	\$ 205.00
Bird Seed Sale & \$100 cash box...	1802.95
Dues & Donation.....	22.00
Debits	
Cash Box	\$ 100.00
Newsletter-----	5.99
Blue Ribbon for Bird Seed.....	1032.15
Sales Tax for Bird Seed Sale.....	141.57
Exhibit Board	133.94
Ending balance-----	\$4244.91

Don't forget the BONUS PAGE

December Presenter: Dr. Neil Snow



Unknown to many students and community members, Pittsburg State has a fantastic resource on campus – the T. M. Sperry Herbarium. During this month's meeting, Dr. Neil Snow, Associate Professor of Biology, presented a talk about the history and conservation importance

of herbarium, while highlighting the impressive features of the herbarium that shares its founding father with our Audubon chapter.

To start off, Dr. Snow reviewed what a herbarium is and why they are necessary to understand plant species' features and distributions worldwide. Since the early 1500s, herbaria have been used as a place to store and categorize dried, pressed plant specimens. Approximately 76 million plant specimens are stored across the 640 herbaria in the US and used as references for medical healers, conservationists, plant taxonomists, and more!

Founded in 1946, the T. M. Sperry herbarium now contains 65,500 plant specimens, with 15,400 more that need to be processed. Plant specimens were collected in 33 countries and 47 states, and 23,800 are databased and 4,500 are digitally imaged for anyone to search for and find online. The current goals for the herbarium include data-basing and imaging all remaining specimens, and adding geographic coordinates for their collection locations. Luckily, Dr. Snow received a National Science Foundation grant to fund these efforts and "upgrade collections curation to 21st century standards".

Dr. Snow ended his presentation with quite a treat – a tour of the T. M. Sperry Herbarium! Audubon members were allowed to visit the herbarium's new location in Hartman Hall and leaf through (plant pun?) some dried specimens that he laid out for us. Dr. Snow emphasized that the "Sperry Herbarium is an open facility to anyone with legitimate interest or need for usage," so if you would like a tour or if you have any questions, feel free to contact Dr. Snow. We are lucky to have such an impressive facility on campus!

Christine Brodsky



HAPPENINGS IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS

CRITTER CONNECTIONS by Bob Mangile

A few years after we moved to our current property our small pond out back had many large bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeiana*) along its banks. Our steady presence seemed to lessen their fear and some would sit still as we passed near by. But one very large and old frog got to be special. He was apparently blind in one eye, which was all white – possibly the result of escaping a snake attack. Over time I would get closer and closer to old “One Eye” and he seemed okay with it. So, on my daily visits to the pond I would test his willingness to be approached. First, within a few yards, then to a few feet, to putting my hand on the muddy bank on his sighted eye side. Eventually I could touch him, even push him a bit, and he would make a noise and scoot over away from my touch. I could never get him to stay still when I would try to put my hand under him and lift him up but I could get some of my hand under him before he jumped in the water. We had him around for a couple of years and then he disappeared. I’m not sure but I think he died after a drought year, when the water was very low, that was followed by a very cold, long winter that froze the water to the bottom. That year we had dead fish, turtles and frogs appearing after the spring thaw and I think old “One Eye” was one of the victims of the winter freeze.



Bullfrog

Some interesting bullfrog facts: Females have eardrums (tympani) the same size as their eyes – male eardrums are larger than their eyes. They will eat anything they can overpower. Fifty years ago I caught one with a very large bluegill fish in its stomach. Maximum lifespan in the wild is estimated at 8 to 10 years, but one captive lived almost 16 years. They must close their eyes to swallow and will suffocate if their mouth is held open. They can grow to over a pound and 8 inches in length. Frogs do not have ribs or claws but they have teeth. No joke!

Note: A similar species that looks like a small bullfrog is the **green frog** (*Lithobates clamitans*) that can grow to 4 inches long. In Kansas “the only currently known populations occur in the Spring River basin in Cherokee County” according to the KDWP&T. They can be distinguished by the dorsolateral ridges on their upper sides which Bullfrogs lack – see photo. They are protected by the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act. ###



Green Frog



Emmett's Pics

Ring-necked Pheasant

This pheasant is a native of Asia, introduced to North America as a game bird for hunting. It is found more commonly in western Kansas. This bird is the colorful male. This photo was taken near Claythorne Lodge, Cherokee, County, Kansas. It probably got loose from there. He was just standing in the ditch near the lodge.

Sightings.....



DIY Bird Feeders



Try your hand at making simple bird feeders.

Insert dowels for perches into plastic liter bottles, fill half a coconut with seed, combine peanut butter with seeds and stuff into pinecones. Hang on branch.

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**



AUDUBON BIRD SEED SALE



The warm weather seemed to slow sales for our 2019 Bird Seed Sale. We made \$529.23, but didn't do as well as in the past. Thanks very much to Blue Ribbon Farm Store for their assistance in the sale and the loan of their trailer. If you need more bird seed during the winter, please stop by their business to purchase seed and thank them for their help with our annual sales event.



**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

Mined Land Winter Bird Count

We had a strong participant list at this year's bird count – fifteen (ten last year), bolstered by Andrew George's three students (one is from Paraguay). This was the 120th year of the National Audubon count and the 28th "official" year of the Mined Land count.

The recently released Audubon report noting that numbers of birds nationwide are down significantly, and the fact that several local folks have observed low numbers at feeders both led to some speculation that our count might be low this year, but such was not the case. The counts for this year were fairly similar to last year— in fact up just a bit (58 species this year vs. 57 in 2019; nearly 5,000 individuals this year compared to near 4,000 last year). One might predict this year's greater participation might result in higher results, but a couple of weather factors this year might have offset the number of observers - glaring sun and particularly high winds. A sunny day is your friend if you can keep the sun at your back, but most observers at the winter count stay in vehicles, and therefore at least much of the time can't escape looking in the direction of the sun, seeing silhouettes with little color and pattern. The 25-30 mph winds this year were not helpful either. Wind possibly kept many birds in shelter, and also made their calls hard to hear in the wind-noisy woodland edges. We probably should have counted more horned larks, chickadees, juncos, cardinals, and blue jays than we did. The variables thrown at us by nature itself plus those of the diversity of observers means that the resulting count on any given day cannot be given too much weight. Yet the variables tend to be mediated by the many thousands of people in the field.

A few other points: I've never understood why we often do not see turkeys on our counts (none at all this year). I see them all the time around home (ok, maybe once a week is not really "all the time"). This is the second year no one has reported bobwhites. No pileated woodpeckers either. Possibly our "best bird" was a Wilson's snipe, spotted by Wayne, Megan, and Bob Estes. It is a bit unusual to see snipe in midwinter, but our relatively mild temperatures probably helped keep a few of these long-billed grubbers around. (By the way, Bob drove over from El Dorado Springs, Missouri, to join our count. See his fine photos below.)

Thanks as always to the intrepid folks who get up early on New Year's Day to get behind binoculars in the service of citizen science.

Article by **Steve Ford**
Photos by **Bob Estes**



Loggerhead shrike



American kestrel



Wilson's snipe