



# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

Nov/Dec 2020 / Issue 2

## OFFICERS

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Bob Mangile

[sperry-galligar.com](http://sperry-galligar.com)

## Next Program

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No programs are scheduled for spring due to coronavirus pandemic.

## Spring Meetings Canceled

Given the current and projected coronavirus circumstances, the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Board decided it would be expedient to cancel the chapter general meetings for winter and spring. We will re-assess in late spring and try to get another newsletter to you in June.

Keep birding and stay safe.

## Special Birdseed Day

At Blue Ribbon Farm & Home (East 4th and Rouse)

**Friday, Dec 4th (7:00 to 5:30) and Saturday, Dec 5th (7:00 to 1:00)**

This year our annual birdseed sale has been modified. Instead of setting up at the Mall, the sale will be held at Blue Ribbon Farm & Home. They will donate 15% of all sales of black oil, wildbird mix, and nyjer thistle these two days to our chapter.

The owners of Blue Ribbon, Dane and Linda Schulz, have generously supplied us with the seed and truck/trailer for our sales for many years. Their kind support continues. **Please take the opportunity to visit their store during the two-day event and be sure to tell your friends.**

Blue Ribbon is located at 1103 E 4th St, in Pittsburg, KS, (just east of East 4th and Rouse.  
Bob Mangile

## 2021 Sperry-Galligar Audubon Christmas Bird Count

**New Year's Day, 7:00 a.m. to afternoon.**

Sign up for your count zone from the map and your bird recording form in advance by contacting Andy George: [adgeorge@pittstate.edu](mailto:adgeorge@pittstate.edu) or 573-777-0652 or 620-235-4030

Or meet Andy at the McCune Farm to Market at 7:00 am. on the morning of the count to get your packet.

For questions or to sign up for your count zone, please contact Andy George.

## Board Minutes

## Audubon Meeting Program

### Treasurer Report

Will report in future newsletter.

## My Go-To Place This Year

Text and Photos by Diane McCallum

I had plans for the summer of 2020. I was going to take a trip to Colorado with my husband and father to see my niece graduate from high school. I was going to explore several state parks in Missouri and Arkansas. I was going to see if we could fit in a trip to South Dakota.

Then came the pandemic. As I'm sure you all experienced, plans changed. We watched my niece's graduation online. I learned how to Zoom with my sister and father. The state parks remained unexplored, at least by me.

I probably would have lost my mind if it hadn't been for one place: Wilderness Park in Frontenac. It had nature and it had enough trails that I wouldn't run into crowds, which is what I needed. I can't even tell you how many times I went there to wander around and try to see something new. Here are a few of the highlights.

One time I was standing near the convergence of two trails, trying to spot a dragonfly, when I caught sight of movement to my right. As I turned my head, I saw a flash of something brown, but it disappeared behind some plants before I could identify it. I was frustrated because I knew that if I went in that direction, I'd scare it away completely, so I stayed there, wondering: rabbit? groundhog? deer? Then it loped into sight: a coyote! I'm sure my mouth fell open because I hadn't expected it to come back and I certainly didn't expect a coyote. It glanced over its shoulder at me as it continued down the path. I waited a few seconds and then walked slowly to the intersection, but the coyote had vanished. I felt lucky to have had such a good look, though.

After one of my walks, I sat on a bench by one of the strip pits, watching the leaves drift on the water. Then I noticed movement on one of the leaves and saw a fuzzy caterpillar making its way across one leaf and onto the nearest. Then, as I stared, the caterpillar walked off the leaf

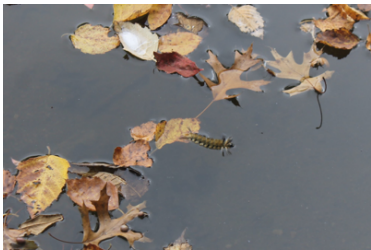
into the water and started swimming! It made writhing movements to propel itself through the water. I'd jumped off the bench to rescue it, but it was clearly not in danger of drowning. I had no idea that caterpillars can swim!

I had encounters with deer more than once. One of them was trying to jump the fence on the west side, but didn't quite make it the first time and retreated into the trees as I approached. I walked past slowly, catching a glimpse of her, and kept walking for several yards before I stopped to look back. The deer strolled toward the fence and then stopped as two people came along the trail on the opposite side. The people stopped, fortunately, and the

deer took a few steps back before calmly vaulting over the fence. I imagine those two people were as impressed by the jump as I was. Another time I rounded a corner to come upon two does. One darted into the trees, but the other stood her ground and gazed at me for a few moments while I stared back. After she'd seen enough, she wandered into the trees to join her companion.

I saw a swimming snake, a leaping bullfrog, hopping cricket frogs, a vulture on a fence post waiting for me to go away, turtles of all sizes, four kinds of woodpeckers (red-bellied, red-headed, downy and pileated), all kinds of dragonflies and butterflies, and a couple of blue-gray gnatcatchers that kept flitting from tree to bush to tree to get a better look at me.

In a way, then, I did get to explore, and I let nature calm my sometimes frayed nerves. I'll make plans for next year, aware that those plans might change, but I'll know that I always have a bit of nature to visit right here if I need it.





## Happenings in Southeast KS

### DOGS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN by Steve Ford

Not a day goes by when someone doesn't ask me, "Steve, what is your life's greatest simple pleasure?" Actually, that's a lie, no one has ever asked me that, but if they ever do I have a ready answer: watching dogs play. Cindy and I have three great pyrenees, two of which are just out of puppyhood. We love these eighty-pound sisters, Cotton and Plum, more than life itself except when they steal and eat our socks and sandals; oh, and when our deer-hunting neighbor calls to say they've shown up on the trail camera under his tree stand, and he is not sure they are conducive to his bagging the big one; oh, and when we let them into the house not knowing they have just dipped into the strip pit and haven't yet shaken; oh, and . . . Love is blind I guess.

We've spent an inordinate amount of time the last several months patching and reinforcing our "dog-proof fence," over a quarter of a mile of it, including an apron so they can't dig out, and a bracketed overhang so they can't climb out (we've watched them climb vertically over our farm gates), so that now the appearance of our fenced perimeter must leave no doubt in a visitor's mind that this is a militia training camp. On the, please God, increasingly rare times they do find a way out, they inevitably return with fully articulated bones of deer and - worrisomely - cow limbs, which they leave scattered around the front yard, making it look like the Serengeti after the wildebeest migration. I'd pay good money to watch them climb back over the reinforced fence with a four-foot - yes, pelvis included - deer limb skeleton. If I possessed a Jaguar XK-E I could not be more proud than those sisters with a deer limb, ownership disputes notwithstanding.

An armadillo waddled into the back yard the other day and the fun was on. Chasing, herding, barking, pawing, jumping, nipping, staring, calling up reinforcements (the old dog, Clover) - well, none of it seemed to convince this "possum on the half shell" that these dogs meant business, that they were not titled GREAT pyrenees for nothing, and were to be properly feared. Certainly the armadillo did occasion- ally run away, but not very far, and disconcertingly to the pups (our babies always), sometimes it ran to- ward them. Mostly it somehow managed its great fear and nonchalantly continued grubbing. The mighty predators eventually took a nap. I will say opossums do react differently if you want to call playing dead reacting. Several times I've found a 'possum in the yard, seemingly deceased. I'll pick them up by the tail, which suspiciously curls a bit around my hand, and drop them on the far side of the fence to await a Christian burial, only to find they'd arisen by the next morning.

About dusk the barred owls start rendering their "who cooks for you," call. Usually mixed in are those sonorous and slightly strange "oooooooooooo" and "ooooaaaaaaa" songs, which I rather think entice the coyotes to start their crazy high-pitched yips and yowls at nightfall. There are several theories as to why coyotes call. My theory is to tease the Ford pups so that they start barking their heads off. Early in their nightly barking marathons - and I have long wondered how they don't get sore throats - they come up with some pretty nice stuff. Either Cotton or Plum, I don't know which, has mastered a long throaty howl that may not be Pavirotti, but is more musical by far than any coyote vocalization. They don't keep it up for long before they get to their doggy barking, but it's great to hear while it lasts.

'Tis a gift to be simple. Who sang that, Madonna?

## Sightings...



Photo by  
Emmett Sullivan

### Cedar-Apple Rust

A fungus found on an eastern red cedar in West Mineral. It was the size of a baseball and jelly-like. The fungus requires two hosts. It will form brown spots on apples, but does not kill the apple tree.

This one was photographed in West Mineral.

Send your newsletter articles, bird sightings, and nature notes to C. Ford by June 10.

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



### 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 renewal membership, send \$15.00 for membership in 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.

Please print and mail to:

**Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society  
816 E. Atkinson Ave.  
Pittsburg, KS 66762**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

### Events & Misc

**Hope you have a nice  
Thanksgiving and  
Christmas holiday.**



**Photo by Diane McCallum**

### Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month...7:00 p.m. to 9 p.m., Room 102, Yates Hall, PSU Campus, Pittsburg, KS.

No meetings in June, July, or August. November/December meeting date to be announced.)



### ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

**Pay membership dues in September.** Please consider paying local membership dues. Our chapter receives 100% of the local dues only. You can subscribe to both. Either way you get the newsletter.

