



# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

March 2023 / Issue 3

## OFFICERS

President  
Mary Jo Meier  
Vice President  
Andrew George  
Secretary  
Megan Corrigan  
Treasurer  
Liz Mangile

## BOARD SUPPORT

Newsletter Editor  
Cindy Ford  
[cford@pittstate.edu](mailto:cford@pittstate.edu)

Web Master  
Bob Mangile  
[sperry-galligar.com](http://sperry-galligar.com)

Membership  
Diane McCallum

## Next Program

Thursday, 7:00  
March 30  
Yates Hall 102  
PSU Campus

## "Kansas Birding Trail and Wildlife Viewing"

Jenn Rader, Director,  
Schermhorn Nature  
Center, will talk about  
the new outdoor  
recreation program  
sponsored by KS Dept.  
of Wildlife & Parks.

## WE ARE ON THE BRINK OF SPRING

Audubon photographers are  
capturing the beginnings...



Bob Mangile

Spring Peeper



Emmett Sullivan

Spring Beauty



Kathy Fox

Red-shouldered Hawk



Kathy Fox

Eastern Bluebird

## Board Minutes...Megan Corrigan

**Sperry Galligar Audubon Minutes** – 23 February 2023, Pittsburg State Univ., Heckert Wells, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

**Attended:** Mary Jo Meier, Mavis Benner, Andrew George, Steve Ford, Cindy Ford, Diane McCallum, Bob Mangile, Liz Mangile, Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan

**Minutes** from the January meeting were read and approved.

**Treasurer's Report** – We have \$5034.63

### Upcoming Events –

**Monthly Meetings:** March 30 – Jenn Rader, Kansas Birding Trails; April 27 – Rick Hines, Amazon

**Bird Walks (destinations tent.):** March 4 – Monahan; April 1 – Neosho Wildlife Area; May 6 – Ford Property; June 6 – Prairie State Park; July 1 – Crawford State Park; August 5 – Neosho Wildlife Area; September 2 – Wilderness Park; October 7 – Schermerhorn Park/SEK Nature Center; November 4 – Bone Creek Lake; December 2 – Shawnee Train Conservaton Area

**Picnic:** May 18 (one week earlier than usual) Dr. Christine Brodsky wildlife camera project.

**Outreach:** April 22 – Earth Day table

**Newsletter** – Bob reminded us that he collects from Cindy a paper color copy and makes a black and white copy. At the end of each year he submits the color copies to the PSU Axe Library archives and the black and white to the Kansas State Archives..

**Membership** – Diane reported that only about 4 local members have not paid dues this year.

**Backyard Bird Count** – 9 Crawford County birders participated and they reported 40 species.

**Possible fundraiser** – Birdathon – birders find sponsors who pledge a certain amount of money donation per bird they see in a certain timeframe. Other chapters have done this successfully. This might be something for us to try.

## Treasurer Report...Liz Mangile

### Financial Report ... March 2023

Beginning balance-----\$5043.78

#### Credit

Membership-----\$ 65.00

National Audubon-----\$ 447.75

Birdhouses-----\$ 40.00

Total-----\$ 552.75

#### Debit

Newsletter-----\$ 9.15

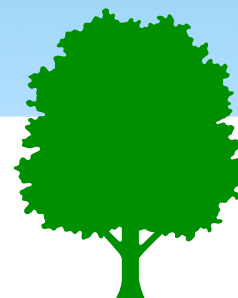
Total-----\$ 9.15

Ending balance.....\$5587.38

### Minutes (cont.)

**Bird Walks** – 10 people attended a very cold February bird walk. Andy has determined tentative destinations for all the 2023 bird walks. The May bird walk will be at the Ford's property and led by Steve and Cindy Ford.

**Earth Day** – Mary Jo will contact Denise Fitzpatrick to let her know we want a table again this year for earth day. Various ideas for activities were discussed. We will try to get small bird books to hand out to children, possibly as a prize for winning a game. Bob will make ant moats and requests donations of copper wire and detergent bottle tops. Steve will invite Tom Glick to sell pollinator plants at our table again. Megan and Wayne will work on updating the trifold display and Cindy has some brochures for the table. Steve will bring birdhouses, T shirts and sweatshirts to sell.





## FEBRUARY PROGRAM RECAP by Megan Corrigan

### Managing for Old Growth Natural Communities at Prairie State Park



Andrew Braun has one main problem at Prairie State Park and it's not what we think. Invasive *Sericea lespedeza* and endangered Mead's milkweed are symptoms. Climate change is a driving force. But the underlying challenge that ties these together at Prairie State Park is that the environment there has too many resources – too much water, and too much nitrogen, for the old growth flora to prevail.

Tallgrass prairies arose in times and places of resource scarcity. They arose 15,000 years ago in the rain-shadow of the Rocky Mountains and spread eastward in the post-glacial Hypsithermal period, when the North American central plains were hot and dry. This means that native old growth prairies are composed of plants that don't need much water or nitrogen. When these resources are abundant, old growth plants will be outcompeted.

Some 3000 acres of Prairie State Park have never been plowed. In these areas, plants, like endangered Mead's milkweed and purple prairie clover, can still be found. Prairie plants have each been assigned a Coefficient of

Conservatism from 1 (weedy, thrive in disturbed areas) to 10 (fragile, require a stable environment), and these two plants have high scores. They require stable environmental conditions through time, which means they need a dry, low nitrogen environment.

But the environment has changed; it is cooler and wetter, so even untouched remnant prairie is changing. In the 1800's when Barton County was surveyed, they documented every tree along each transect. At that time, the nearest tree was 1.5 miles away from the park. Now, about 200 acres of the park is a forest, made up mostly of hackberry, Osage Orange and other pioneer woodland species. Even in some of the highest quality conserved prairie, Himalayan blackberry, a weedy invasive species, is gaining a foothold.

Andrew Braun ensures the old growth species don't get outcompeted in the moister, more nutrient rich environment of today. He manages the park to ensure resource scarcity and to reduce productivity and nitrogen in the soil. He described several tools including fire, herbicides, mowing and haying. Grazing also increases prairie species diversity, but many of the documented species have low Coefficients of Conservatism, meaning they are the weedier species. Grazing increases nitrogen availability, which is exactly what Prairie State Park doesn't need. Therefore, the park keeps the bison herd numbers low, between 30 and 60 to minimize their impact.

If Andrew Braun is successful at balancing the application of fire, mowing, haying and herbicides to keep nutrient levels low, then Prairie State Park should continue to be a special place, ideal for the highly conservative plant species like Mead's milkweed and for prairie-dependent animal species like the dickcissel and Sprague's pipit for years to come.



## Happenings in Southeast KS

### Sightings...



Our Annual Sperry-Galligar Picnic will be held on Thursday, May 18 (a week earlier this year than usual), 6:00 p.m. in the Homer Cole Community Center. The chapter will provide fried chicken and iced tea. Please bring a covered dish and your tableware.

Our speaker this year is Dr. Christine Brodsky, who will present findings from a study on locating spotted skunks.

We want to get a count for the picnic. Please let Bob and Liz Mangile know if you plan to attend. Email [rmangile@cox.net](mailto:rmangile@cox.net) or [lawnmowerliz@cox.net](mailto:lawnmowerliz@cox.net)

### EARTH DAY 2023

Sperry-Galligar Audubon will participate in the Pittsburg Area Earth Day, April 22. The event will be held at the Miner's Pavillion, downtown Pittsburg from 9:00 to 5:00.

We are planning to provide a table with information, bird houses, ant moats for hummingbird feeders, t-shirts, and sweat shirts for sale, along with some friendly folks to greet passers by.

If you would like to help that day, please contact Mary Jo Meier at our next meeting. If you are attending the event, please stop by to say hello.

### BEWARE: THE BEAUTY CAN DECEIVE

Many non-native spring and summer plants grow well in our area, look beautiful, and are relatively inexpensive to put in landscaping. Watch out though—they can become invasive, competing with our native flora.

Some of the beauties in vacant fields include:

**Bradford pear trees:** commonly planted as landscape trees, but they can produce berries that start new trees.

**Bush honeysuckle:** once promoted by state extension services for wildlife, the plant has become a major pest—difficult to control.

**Winter creeper:** sold as a ground cover by plant nurseries.

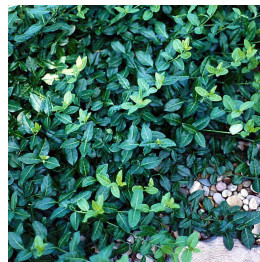
**Do not buy these plants and try to eliminate the escapees.**



Bradford pear



Bush honeysuckle



Winter creeper



**Application for Membership  
Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society**

For first-time National Audubon membership: send \$20.00 and become a member of both organizations, receive 4 copies of Audubon Magazine annually and 8 copies of Sperry-Galligar Newsletter. Please make your check to: National Audubon Society.

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 Audubon Society.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_



**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.)

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

## EVENTS & ETC.

### March Bird Walk

4 March 2023

Monahan Outdoor

Education Center

8 attendees

19 species seen

**Canada Goose**

**Wood Duck**

**Cooper's Hawk**

**Red-shouldered Hawk**

**Red-tailed Hawk**

**Red-bellied Woodpecker**

**Pileated Woodpecker**

**Eastern Phoebe**

**Blue Jay**

**American Crow**

**Carolina Chickadee**

**Tufted Titmouse**

**Carolina Wren**

**Eastern Bluebird**

**Dark-eyed Junco**

**Song Sparrow**

**Swamp Sparrow**

**Red-winged Blackbird**

**Northern Cardinal**

**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 local and national. Either way you get the newsletter.