



NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

April 2023 / Issue 4

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

BOARD SUPPORT

Newsletter Editor
Cindy Ford
cford@pittstate.edu

Web Master
Bob Mangile
sperry-galligar.com

Membership
Diane McCallum

Next Program
Thursday, 7:00
April 27
Yates Hall 102
PSU Campus

"The Beauty of
Brazil" by
Rick Hines, Erie, KS.
Visit Brazil
vicariously to see a
country that has
20% of the world's
biodiversity.

Audubon and Slavery

Steve Ford

Don't blame me. Cindy was desperate for an article.

Hanging in our living room is a JJ Audubon print that we acquired several years ago. It is considered one of his masterpieces: seven Carolina parakeets of both sexes and all ages in a cockle bur plant, drawn life-size as were all his subjects in the gargantuan *Birds of America*. The print's vivid greens, yellows, and reds explode from the picture plane with such energy that at first glance one almost wants to duck. We love it, but since we first purchased it I cannot look at it without a bit of remorse, for of course these beautiful birds - the only North American parrot - were hunted to extinction.



Too, for the last few years since I've learned an additional fact, I've felt an additional shadow—the fact that at one time its creator owned slaves, nine of them. Should we take it down?

I just re-read Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Richard Rhodes' biography of JJ Audubon (2004). (I'll be glad to loan it to you). Audubon was a largely self-taught genius whose massive life's work, including his *Ornithological Biography*, not only elevated the beauty and value of birds as no one else, including Alexander Wilson, ever did, he extolled a very young America's spirit, freshness, and natural riches to a Europe weary of revolution and economic care. His personal life, as Rhodes reveals, was a roller coaster ride of distresses and triumphs. He was a handsome, charismatic, inventive guy, an incredible observer of nature, and by the necessity of his ridiculously ambitious dream, extremely well travelled throughout the woods, rivers, towns, and cities of the eastern US, often walking at a five mph pace, and living off the land. There is no record, by the way, despite what must have been quite ample opportunities, that he ever cheated on his wife or purposefully neglected her or his two sons. He was tireless in his labors, and hardened against the sometimes severe hardships of wilderness living and frequent poverty. Nor did he smoke or drink. This French immigrant loved the woods, loved America, and was almost neurotically ardent about painting birds and recording their behavior and ecological relationships. Yes, he shot thousands for his art, for his many naturalist friends and museums, and simply to eat, as many on the frontier did, but nothing to the degree of slaughter as the market hunters, eggers, and indeed farmers of the time.

But when he was just starting out as a young man in Kentucky, he owned slaves, and by so doing was involved in a very widespread institution that deprived them of all the hopes, opportunities, and enthusiasms he enjoyed. One can suggest that he was a man—a white man—of his times. His father, wealthy for a time in Haiti, was a sugar plantation owner. John James, as keen an observer as he was, and as prolific a journal- and letter-writer as he was, wrote very little (that I am aware of) about his slaves or slavery itself, though he walked among that institution almost constantly. (Interesting I think is the fact that as a young man, in happily traipsing the deep woods and swamps, he often crossed paths with indigenous people, including Osages.

(Cont. on p. 2)

Board Minutes...Megan Corrigan

Sperry Galligar Audubon Minutes – 30 March 2023, Pitt State, Heckert Wells, 3rd floor; Attended: Mary Jo Meier, Mavis Benner, Andrew George, Steve Ford, Cindy Ford, Diane McCallum, Bob Mangile, Liz Mangile, Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Kathy Fox

Minutes from the February meeting were read and approved with one correction – Rick Hines will present the Beauty of Brazil in April. Treasurer's Report – We have \$5570.56 in the checking account.

Monthly Meetings: April 27 – Rick Hines, The Beauty of Brazil. If Rick Hines cannot present, we will find an alternative.

Bird Walks (destinations tent.): 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 Trail CA Picnic; May 18 (one week earlier than usual) Dr. Christine Brodsky wildlife camera project.

Outreach: April 22 – Earth Day: We will have a table with information, an activity for kids, and items for sale.

Officers for next year – Proposed slate: President – Andy George, Vice President – Megan Corrigan, Secretary – Mary Jo Meier, Treasurer – Liz Mangile. New members are encouraged to be on the board.

Picnic – Mavis is working on tablecloths and decorations

Photography event – A suggestions was made to have an event for the photographers among our group to share their photos.

Attendance: March meeting – 30; March bird walk – 8; April bird walk – 11

Treasurer Report...Liz Mangile

Financial Report—April 2023

Beginning Balance	\$ 5587.38
Credits	
Memberships	\$ 40.00
Moat	2.00
Debits	
Newsletter	\$ 9.82
Bird Pocket Guides	75.00
Ending Balance	\$ 5544.56

He wrote with some frequency quite respectfully, even admiringly, of them, and later wrote compassionately about the sorrow he observed on the faces of Seminoles being marched from their ancestral homes in Florida to where they knew not.) There is a telling account in Rhodes' book about Audubon in New Orleans, shortly after he sold his slaves - because he could no longer afford them. He was forced to carry a substantial burden of his art supplies through the streets, and people stopped and stared. Why? Because white people of any means at all just didn't carry their own stuff. Slavery was that pervasive, especially in the South (but in the North as well, if indirectly, e.g., textile mills in New England depended on southern cotton). Yes, of course there were southern Whites of means in Audubon's time who did not own slaves, but they were few. Even Audubon's friend, John Bachman, a Lutheran pastor in Charleston, South Carolina, and after whom Bachman's warbler is named, owned slaves.

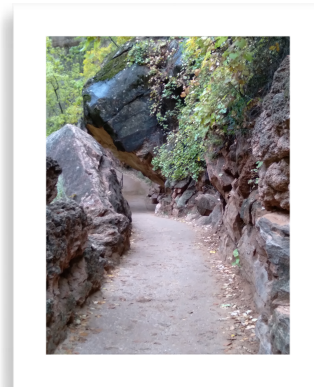
Is evil less evil if nearly everyone is doing it? I think not, but do we erase Audubon's name from history? Maybe, but then to avoid hypocrisy we must also rename our nation's capital and tear down its most iconic monuments, not to mention blasting at least two faces off Mount Rushmore.

Today we are ruining our environment, a transgression for which our descendants may pay dearly. In 150 years will they consider that transgression as evil, right up there with slavery and Indian removal? Are we all Audubon, pursuing our ambitions within a terribly destructive institution?

Should Cindy and I take down our parakeet print, or just continue to look at it with mixed emotions? I just don't know - but we like it, and (it *does* match the rugs).

March PROGRAM RECAP by Megan Corrigan

Kansas Birding Trails



Jenn Rader, Director of KDWP's Southeast Kansas Nature Center and President of the Kansas Ornithological Society, helped implement the Kansas Birding Trail program. Other states have birding, and now Kansas does too. The trails are driving routes that highlight birding hotspots and ecotourism events in Kansas. An example in our area is the Kansas Woodlands birding trail which runs from Schermerhorn Park to La Cygne Lake, with stops along the way including Mined Lands Wildlife Area, Bone Creek Lake and Lake Fort Scott.

In national and state surveys of outdoor enthusiasts, respondents have shown declining interest in consumptive wildlife activities (hunting, fishing, trapping) and increasing interest in non-consumptive activities (wildlife viewing, photography, eco-tourism). KDWP has long been mainly focused on hunting and fishing, and receives most of its financial support from licenses and taxes. Kansas Birding Trails serves a new and growing audience, encouraging Kansans to appreciate the birds around them and drawing birders from out of state.

Kansas Birding Trails launched on March 7, 2022. We get to log on, enjoy the finished project, and head out with our binoculars, but Rader offered a behind the scenes look at what was necessary to make this idea a reality. Getting the program established and the website launched was a colossal effort that was supported by some of the best bird experts, photographers and nature interpreters in the state. The web design was done by an enthusiastic marketing firm, with no birding experience, so they had to be gently corrected when they included photos of cute baby Sandhill Cranes, since the cranes just pass through Kansas, but don't rear young here.

Some challenges are more complicated than swapping out a photo and are still not resolved. It's not clear how wildlife viewers should participate in the financial support of the natural areas they use. Hunters and fishers pay for licenses, and much of that money is used to conserve habitat. Wildlife viewers rely on the same habitat, but there is no parallel established mechanism in Kansas for ecotourists to contribute to the associated costs of maintaining the habitat.

This is an issue that some states have addressed by offering incentives. Arizona has a program that wildlife viewers can join, for a fee, that gives them access to unique experiences such as observing when a park biologist mist-nets bats or works with endangered species. Other states have wildlife viewing bumper stickers that can be purchased with the proceeds going towards non-game wildlife conservation. For KDWP to continue to implement non-game wildlife programs, they need to find a mechanism for wildlife watchers to contribute financially. For now, there is the Chickadee Checkoff on Kansas Tax returns, which supports non-game species. Maybe there will be more options in the future. Meanwhile, **check out the Kansas Birding Trails website and decide where to go next!**

LOCAL COLOR AND SOUNDS



Rue Anemone — April 5 — Woods
Cherokee County



Black-and-white Warbler — April 3 — Woods
Crawford County



Double-crested Cormorant — Crawford County

Bird Walk, April 1, 2023 at Neosho Wildlife Area
11 Attendees; 46 species observed

Snow goose
Canada goose
Trumpeter swan
Blue-winged teal
Green-winged teal
Cinnamon teal
Northern shoveler
Gadwall
American widgeon
Mallard
Northern pintail
Ring-necked duck
Greater/lesser scaup
Bufflehead
Ruddy duck
Mourning dove
American coot
Killdeer
Wilson's snipe
Lesser yellowlegs
Greater/lesser yellowlegs
Ring-billed gull
Double-crested cormorant
American white pelican
Great blue heron
Turkey vulture
Red-tailed hawk
Red-headed woodpecker
Downy woodpecker
Pileated woodpecker
Eastern phoebe
Blue bjay
American crow
Fish crow
Carolina chickadee
Tufted titmouse
Barn swallow
Carolina wren
Brown thrasher
Northern mockingbird
Eastern bluebird
Song sparrow
Lincoln's sparrow
Swamp sparrow
Eastern meadowlark
Red-winged blackbird
Brown-headed cowbird
Northern cardinal



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 or lawnmowerliz@cox.net

MOREL SEASON



Start looking for morels in woodland areas. The fungus will pop up in dry leaves, particularly after a rain.

Newcomers to searching for the delicacies should go with an experienced person.

Morels are not like typical mushrooms. To eat them, soak the hollow morels in salt water for several hours. Slice them and saute in butter. Enjoy

EARTH DAY 2023

Sperry-Galligar Audubon will participate in the Pittsburg Area Earth Day, April 22. The event will be held at the Pritchett 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 come by our table to volunteer. If you are attending the event, please stop by to say hello.

**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**

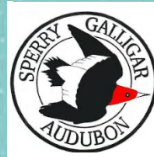
Name _____

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.

Chapter Shop

T-shirt \$15

Sweat shirt \$20

Bluebird House \$15

Wren House \$12

Ant Moat \$2

Backyard Bird

Pocket Guide \$2

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Stop by the Earth Fair Table April 22 to get items...

Or...contact one of the Audubon Board members to buy an item.

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.