



NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

Oct 2023 / Issue 2

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cford@pittstate.edu

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Bob Mangile
sperry-galligar.com

Membership
Diane McCallum

Next Program
Thursday, 7:00
October 26
Yates Hall 102
PSU Campus

"A Year of Birds" by
Bob Estes. Bob will
share his
photographs of
birds. He has been
taking photos near
his El Dorado, MO
home for years.

HATE THE SNAKE

Steve Ford

I opened my garage door recently and a black rat snake fell down onto my right shoulder, looked at me for a couple of seconds, evidently didn't like the view, fell onto the ground and took off. Yes, I was startled, but not freaked. Certainly I have as many phobias as the next guy - don't ask me to hop around in the rafters of a barn under construction; I've been called "post hugger" on more than one occasion - but an extreme fear of snakes is not on the list of big fears. The incident did jog some thoughts.

My realization that a (non-venomous) snake bite was trifling at most came when I started hanging around the captive snakes of the Nature Reach program at Pittsburg State. The snakes didn't usually even attempt to bite, but when they did, the bite was nearly painless and bloodless. No big deal whatsoever, even from the big boa constrictor. Cindy and company got nailed all the time, the only effect was being just a little surprised. A bite from a mouse or the larger vole is much more painful, and even that is not the end of the world.

Some stories: One of my wildlife students was a very large football player, a lineman called Big Jack. We were discussing a potential extra credit field project at the Monahan Center west of Pittsburg, and Jack made the mistake of asking if there were any snakes out there. I said "of course, why?" and this giant let slip he was afraid of snakes. I immediately said his new project was to rid himself of this phobia, especially silly for a wildlifer, to which he expressed consternation. The deal was non-negotiable, and we started that same day with a snake literally smaller than a night crawler. Jack didn't like it at all, and refused to pick the squirming little guy off the table top, but did agree to hold it in his cupped hand. By the end of the semester he was playing with the big king snake, the long black rat snake, and even the heavy boa. Jack later became manager of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife reserve near New Orleans, where occasionally a snake would drop out of the trees into his johnboat. His aides would squeal. Jack just laughed.

Many times during the summer Cindy has snagged a rat snake in her chicken coop and harrassed it until it disgorged a stolen hen egg. We then bag up the culprit and drive it several miles down the road and release it. "The egg is *our* breakfast, thank you. Your friends are welcome to hang around outside the coop and eat mice."

(Cont. on Page 4)



Board Minutes...Mary Jo Meier

Attended: Mavis Benner, Andrew George, Steve Ford, Cindy Ford, Bob Mangile, Liz Mangile, Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Kathy Fox

Minutes from the August meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report – We have \$5583.78 in the checking account.

A motion was passed for the treasurer to check what rates our CD's are returning and make changes if current CD rates offer better terms. There was some discussion about whether CD's are the best option. Some other non-profits have investment accounts. The consensus was that CD's are preferable because the account cannot lose value.

Publicity – Wayne took \$200 to KRPS and they will announce our programs as sponsors of Bird Note each month. KRPS conducted and aired an interview with our September speaker earlier this week. Andra Stefanoni will include our monthly meetings with her other press releases if we get her the information.

Programs-

October – Bob Estes – Bird Photography
December – Meagan Duffee – Fighting Wildland Fires
January – Kyle Steinert – Farlington Fish Hatchery Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration
February – Jeff Cantrell – Ozark Chinquapin
March – Sally Imhoff – Animal Rehabilitation and "Leave Them Alone"
April – Max and Eweleen Good – Prairie Wildflowers
May – picnic – open
Bob will book Homer Cole for the last Thursday in May, May 30th.

Bird Walks-

October 14 – Wilderness Park ; November 11 – Bone Creek Lake; December – TBA

Additional Events-

PSU Sustainability Fair September 27 – 12 students signed up to be added to the e-mail list.

Bird Seed Sale – Bob will contact Blue Ribbon to see if they are willing to continue to conduct the annual event. It was decided to ask that it be held the second Saturday in December, December 9th, so it can be

Treasurer Report...Liz Mangile

October 2023

Beginning Balance\$5583.64

Credit

09/06/23 – Dues.....\$ 60.00

09/29/23 – Deposit, dues, etc.....\$310.00

Debit

08/24/23 – Audubon of Kansas....\$1000.00

08/24/23 – KRPS..... 200.00

09/28/23 – Homer Cole Picnic Res. 80.00

Ending Balance.....\$4673.64

Cont.

after our December meeting and we can let members know.

Other expected events- 1. New Years Day Bird Count;
2. Earth Day Fair

Historic Files – Kathy Fox went through our historic files and made a list. She asks for feedback on what to keep and what can be discarded. Megan suggested much of it can be scanned and kept electronically. We hope to scan old photos and have a slideshow as part of the SGAS picnic.

Online Payments - Wayne and Andy will look in to the possibility of accepting payment for dues online and share information with the board.

Audubon of Kansas – Steve and Cindy attended the monthly Zoom meeting. AOK will have a [Celebration of Cranes](#) November 3-4 at Quivira.

Other Business: On November 4th in McPherson there will be a [Photography Workshop](#) led by a National Geographic photographer that might be of interest to our members.

*Megan Corrigan and Wayne Bockelman
Acting Secretaries for Mary Jo Meier*



Photo by Bob Mangile

Protecting Birds from Buildings

Krystal Anton kept finding dead birds on the Johnson County Community College (JCCC) campus on her way to her office and she decided to do something about it. She has spent several years making the campus safer for birds.

First, Anton looked at light. Eighty percent of migrating birds migrate at night, using stars and the moon to navigate. The sky-glow from cities disorients birds. An extreme example is the 9/11 tribute, where the annual columns of light pull thousands of birds off course. It's such a problem that there are bird monitors during

the event who track birds by radar and periodically turn the light off for 20 minutes to let the birds re-orient. But all cities have light pollution that interferes with birds' navigation.

Anton convinced JCCC to join [Lights Out Heartland](#), an organization that encourages turning lights out in May and September during migration, and to use light responsibly, only where and when it's needed. Partners include the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, which turned off night-time illumination in April 2023 during spring migration. Lights Out Heartland suggests:

- Target lights so they shine down on the ground where it's needed instead of all around.
- Use motion detectors and timers so lights turn off when not needed.
- Use warmer, more orange 2700K temperature light.

Next Anton looked at windows. She and a team of volunteers walked around each building daily for a year to document injured and dead birds. She found that the worst spots for birds were places where they could see through the structure and thought they could fly out the other side and places where the windows reflected trees.

Anton found that putting visible dots on the outside of the glass windows at two-inch intervals reduced collisions. Lacking dots, mirror-tinted glass or glass with black blinds caused more collisions while dirty windows and windows with white blinds had fewer collisions. Anton's advice – don't wash your windows before migration! The [American Bird Conservancy](#) website has resources for homeowners looking to prevent bird collisions.

Anton found over 300 dead and injured birds on campus during that first year but now, after treating 6000 sq. ft. of windows on campus, the number of annual bird fatalities has declined by about half. She has found 95 species of birds in the five years of the project. Some species, like robins and cuckoos, seem to still collide with windows just as frequently. But there are far fewer warblers being found these days. So often, we see problems and think that nothing can be done about them. Anton saw a problem and has been able to do something about it. That is inspiring and hopeful.





HATE THE SNAKE (Cont.)

Most of the time we stop when we see a vulnerable snake curled on a warm road. Sometimes they will scoot to the roadside grass with a gentle nudge, but often they coil up to defend themselves. We have to get a little more aggressive, and occasionally just pick them up. Yes, they bite, but so what? Over the years we've received many calls from folks wanting us to remove snakes from under steps, beneath air conditioners, within patio walls. etc. We're glad to do it if it means saving the life of these innocent animals. We simply gently pick them up. Several times we've heard our neighbors whisper behind us, "I wouldn't have done that for a hundred dollars!"

I guess I can understand a dislike of the rather unusual loopy morphology of a snake, especially when coupled with the knowledge that some snakes are venomous. I just cannot come to grips with the general hatred of all snakes. especially when otherwise good and gentle people laugh nervously and declare they recently killed a snake with a hoe or car. I wrote a poem many years ago shortly after a fire in the Nature Reach room in Heckert-Wells Hall killed several captive animals, including Annie, the boa constrictor:

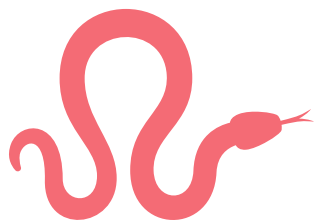
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LAB FIRE KILLS SNAKES

Freedom is all we ask.
Not admiration, nor fear, nor love.
But freedom. Just freedom.
Denied the sun and moon, then all we ask
Is life itself. A waterbowl and life.
Just life.

Your brethren, cast in the Image,
Tap the glass and boast,
"I hate them. Just hate them."

Now that we're gone, our bowls boiled dry,
We cannot ask for much.
But dare we ask just this:
Hate us less. Just hate us less.



CELEBRATION OF CRANES

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November 3-4
Quivera National
Wildlife Refuge, KS

Register & get more
information at
[audubonofkansas.
org](http://audubonofkansas.org)

OR

Nature
Photography with
Jim Richardson,
National
Geographic
November 4
McPherson, KS

Register by
October 20th
Gerald Wiens
407 S. Lincoln
Marion, KS. 66861

Audubon Artistic Notebook



**Photos by Emmett Sullivan,
West Mineral, KS**

The common sunflower is the Kansas State Flower. It and many other species of sunflowers bloom in masses during late summer and fall.

Kathy Fox takes Photos near her Pittsburg Country Home



Nashville warblers are small colorful birds but surprisingly difficult to see since they move constantly hunting insects in trees. They have left our area in their fall migration.



Turkey vultures can be seen soaring and riding thermal air masses from late spring to late summer in southeastern Kansas. Most of the turkey vultures migrate to the south for the winter.

**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 _____



SEND ALL CHECKS TO SPERRY-GALLIGAR AUDUBON

Local DUES: \$15

Mail your check or find Liz Mangile at the next meeting to continue your membership.

EVENTS ETC.

JOIN OUR NEXT BIRD WALK

NOVEMBER 11

Bone Creek Reservoir

No Program Meeting in November.

Combined meeting in early December.

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

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.